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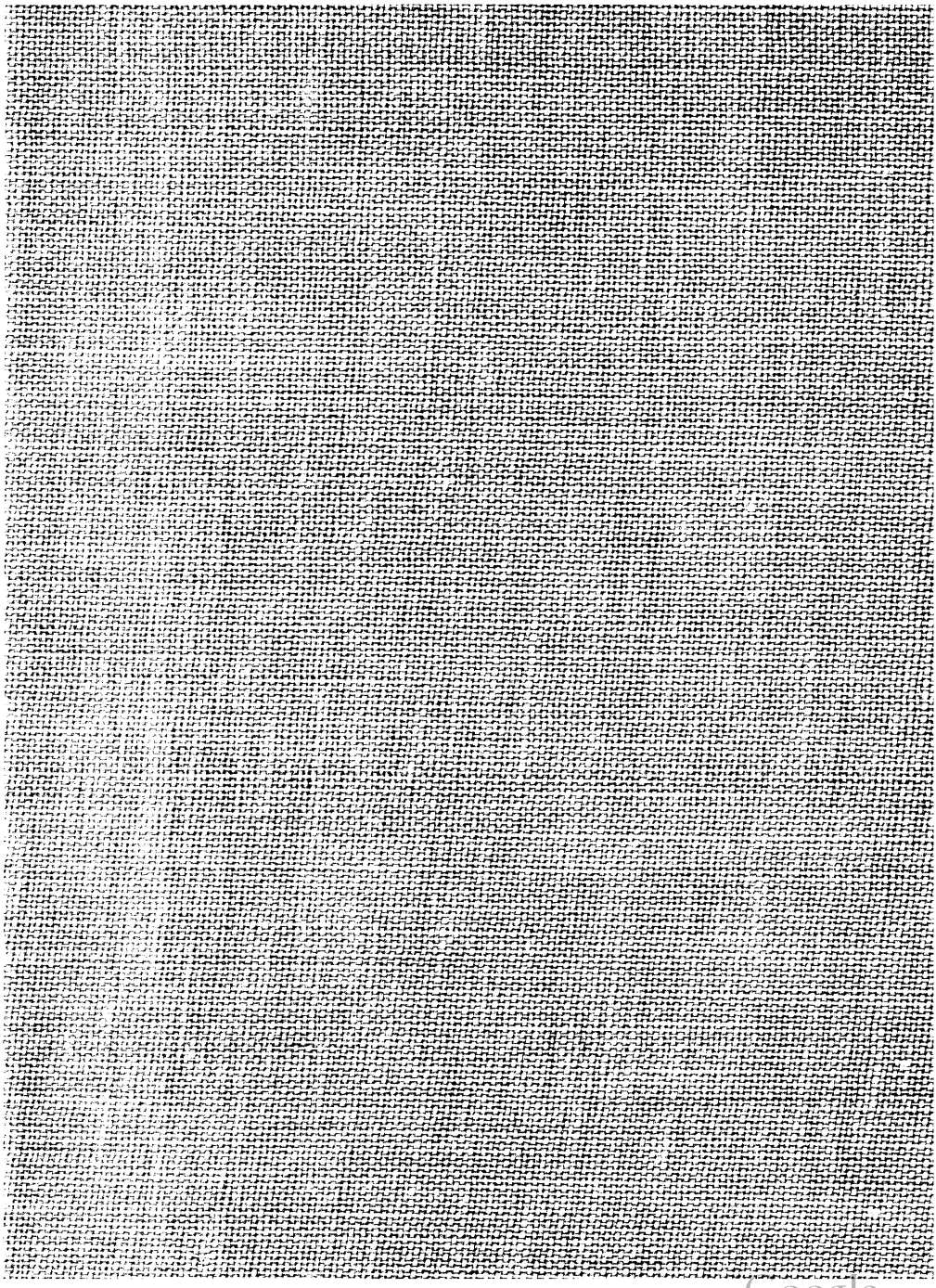
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THE

# DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

# JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

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THE

# DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

## JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
MDCCCXLIII.

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LONDON
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# DEDICATION.

TO

## W. A. DOW, ESQ.

OF THE KING'S BENCH WALK, TEMPLE,

THIS,

THE THIRD VOLUME OF MY COLLECTED PLAYS,

IS MOST GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,
BY HIS FRIEND AND SERVANT,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

LONDON,
DEC. 20, 1842.

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# THE MAID OF MARIENDORPT.

## A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.



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# DEDICATION.

*9th October*, 1838.

My Dear Sir,

Permit me to inscribe this Drama to the man, whose spontaneous good offices of anxious confiding friendship have essentially facilitated the prosecution of my literary labours, during a protracted period of peculiar difficulty.

Your attached and faithful servant,

J. S. KNOWLES.

To Edward Cooper, Esq.
33, *Piccadilly*.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

To Miss PORTER's novel of "The Village of Mariendorpt," I am indebted for the plot of this drama. She will excuse, I trust, modification and omissions, which my peculiar craft rendered, as I conceived, indispensable; and, at the same time, accept my thanks for many an hour of delightful instructive beguilement derived from the perusal of her works.

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## CHARACTERS.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT THE HAYMARKET IN 1838.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *General Kleiner* | (Governor of Prague) | MR. STRICKLAND. |
| *Baron Idenstein* | (his Nephew) | MR. WALTER LACY. |
| *Lieutenant of the Castle* | | MR. BISHOP. |
| *Joseph* | (a Jew, friend to Muhldenau) | MR. WEBSTER. |
| *Ahab* | (his Steward) | MR. GOUGH. |
| *Muhldenau* | (the Minister of Mariendorpt) | MR. KNOWLES. |
| *Rupert* | (betrothed to Meeta) | MR. WARRELL. |
| *Hans* | (Servant to Muhldenau) | MR. BUCKSTONE. |
| *Rodolph* | (Soldiers) | MR. GALLOT. |
| *Gerold* | (Soldiers) | MR. HUTCHINGS. |
| *Lodowick* | (Soldiers) | MR. GREEN. |
| *Courier* | | MR. CLARK. |
| *Servant.* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Adolpha* | (Wife of Idenstein) | MISS COOPER. |
| *Madame Roselheim* | (Mother of Rupert) | MRS. DAWSON. |
| *Meeta* | (Daughter to Muhldenau) | MISS ELPHINSTONE. |
| *Esther* | (Housekeeper to Muhldenau) | MRS. GLOVER. |

*Soldiers, Male and Female Servants, &c.*

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# THE MAID OF MARIENDORPT.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Garden, Low Garden Wall, and a House.*

*Enter a* Courier.

*Cour.* Hoa, there! You in the garden there!
*Hans* [*without*]. Anan!— [*Enters.*]
Good day, Sir. A fine morning. Did you call?
O Esther! Esther!
*Cour.* Who lives here?
*Hans.* My master.
*Cour.* That know I well as you do! Do you think
I took you for the owner of the house?
*Hans.* I never said you did. O Esther!
*Cour.* Who
Lives here?
*Hans.* My master, as I said before.
*Cour.* You sluggish-witted knave! I want to know
Your master's name.
*Hans.* Couldn't you tell me so
At once? What need of going round about,
The gate before your nose? Why give you talk,
And call you names, when all the fault's your own?
How could I guess it was my master's name
You wished to know—O Esther!
*Cour.* Who lives here?
*Hans.* The minister of Mariendorpt.

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*Cour.* Is that
Thy master's name ?
*Hans.* Why, 'tis all one. His name
Is Muhldenau, and he's the minister
Of Mariendorpt.
*Cour.* Is that the only door
To the house ?
*Hans.* Go round, you'll find another door,
The proper one—O Esther !
*Cour.* This way ?
*Hans.* Yes.
*Cour.* I'd like to have the quick'ning of thy wits !
*Esther* [*without*]. What does that coxcomb speaking
there so high ?
*Hans.* There's Esther coming ! You had best be off !
*Cour.* Hang you and her together ! [*Goes out.*
*Hans.* That is kind.
I would not mind to hang along with her !
I'm sick for love ! I'm sure I am ! I have lost
My appetite ! My stomach was my clock
That used to give me note of eating-time—
It never warns me now ! A smoking dish
Was sure to set my heart a-beating once ;
Now be it flesh, or fish, or fowl, or aught,
It moves me nothing. I would rather feast—
A thousand times I would—on Esther's face !
I'm mortal sick for love ! I used to sleep ;
Scarce touch'd my head my pillow, I was off,
And, let me lie, I took my measure on 't
Six hours, at least, upon a stretch ! but now
I toss and turn, lie straight, or doubled up,
Enfold mine arms, or throw them wide abroad,
Rhyme o'er my prayers, or count a hundred out,
And then begin again—yet not a wink
The richer for 't, but rise as I lie down !
And 'tis true love that ails me !—very love !
Of womankind but one can work my cure !
'Tis not as one may fancy veal, and yet
Put up with mutton ! If I get not her,
I starve and die ! How I do love thee, Esther !
But thou regard'st it not, nor pay'st it heed ;

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Thou ratest me as nothing ; but I 'm something,
Or never had I fall'n in love with thee.
Nor durst I tell thee how I love thee, Esther !
O ! my fair Esther ! O ! my goddess, Esther !
My lily, pink, rose, tulip, everything
That 's beautiful and sweet !—would thou wast by
To hear the love-names I am calling thee !

ESTHER *enters, speaking angrily, holding some roots.*

*Esther.* Hoa, sirrah Hans ? Is this your work ?
*Hans.* Dear Esther !
Esther, I can bear anything except
Your anger ! labour without wages !—work
From morn till night—go without breakfast, dinner,
Or supper—suffer aught, yet be a man !
But when you rate me I am good for nothing !—
A joint that's pick'd to the bone—fish, three days stale—
Wine gone a month without the stopper—cheese
Scoop'd to the rind and kept in a hot pantry,
Or foot of capon only with the strings
Raked from the garbage where 't has lain a week !
Don't scold me then—in sooth you should not do 't,
For never say I unkind word to thee,
But call thee still all sorts of loving names.
*Esther.* You 've spoil'd my garden! hoe'd my tulips up
Instead of weeds—you have—
*Hans.* Don't stamp at me,
It makes my heart jump—Ah !—'Twas kind of you
To stop ! But knew she how I loved her foot,
She would not stamp it at me.
*Esther.* Why do you touch
My garden ?
*Hans.* 'Tis to make it orderly ;
Keep the earth smooth, and rake it small as crumbs ;
Prop the tall flowers with standards ; clear the beds
Of chick-weed, grass, and thievish dandelion,
That sucks up all the nourishment around it ;
Trim the box edges straight and of a piece,
And roll the gravel-walks till they are even
And smooth as any carpet.



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*Esther.* Would your pains
Would spare themselves! The other day you broke
My finest rose.
*Hans.* It was with kissing it!
It was indeed your finest rose, and so
I call'd it Esther, and in very truth
Made love to it, and in my rapture broke it!
O Esther, if you knew—
*Esther.* Knew what?
*Hans.* Nay, nothing.
You take me up so snappishly! I am sure
I bear you much good will—I say but good
Because I am afraid to tell you what
I bear you; and when you intreat me harshly
I can't endure it, but it brings my heart
Into my throat, that I begin to choke,
And then I fall a-crying. Don't you see
I 'm crying now—and wiping of my eyes?
*Esther.* A fly has got into them.
*Hans.* Do you say
A fly? I would it were so small a thing!
I would it were a gnat, a wasp, a hornet—
Better be stung by anything than Esther.
A fly indeed! I would it were a fly—
It was no fly! O Esther, if you knew!
*Esther.* Knew what? What dost thou mean?
*Hans.* Alack-aday!
*Esther.* Go clean the knives and forks!—
[*Stamping at him.*
*Hans.* They are made of steel,
And steel is hard, and, if it is, no wonder.
'Tis steel—and 'tis its nature! 'Tis not so
With human hearts, for they are flesh and blood,
Whereof was never made, nor will be made,
Nor can be made, a knife and fork, and yet
No steel at times is harder! 'Tis a pity.
*Esther.* Is all that silver clean'd?
*Hans.* How sweet a sound
Has silver! Yet 'tis heat proof. Without fear
You dip it in a pot of boiling broth,
Which you can not the tongue, and yet how harsh
The tongue will sometimes sound!

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*Esther* [*stamping*]. Have you your wits?
*Hans.* Yes!—No!—I only have a part of them.
I'll tell you where the other part is gone
If you will let me.
*Esther.* Well, Sir?
*Hans.* If you knew——
*Esther* [*stamping more violently*]. Begone, I'll never know!—[HANS *goes out.*]—What does he mean?
The creature 's not in love with me? Ne'er yet
Met I the man was bold enough to woo me,
And that among bold men—and would he try,
Whom nature by mistake did frame a man,
And give a chicken's heart to? I should like
To see him woo me! Why I have ta'en his part,
As doth a mother her girl-petted boy's
A thousand times—saved him from kicks and beatings—
Fought for him while he has stood by and crow'd
To see me win his battle——"If I knew!"
I half suspect the thing 's in love with me!
And, now I think on 't, for this month or two
The boy is alter'd wond'rously! He sighs,
And sighs!—and mumbles to himself, and goes
Moping about the house. Sure as I live,
The boy 's in love, and I'm to have a husband!
I, to whom man durst never say a soft thing
The second time! A husband! I shall die
At the thought [*laughs*]. Make Hans my husband [*laughs*]—then the end
O' th' world were come [*laughs*]. O dear! my sides will crack
With laughter! Esther go to church with Hans!
Take oath to love, to honour, and obey him! [*laughs.*]
Yes, with a curtsey! and then take him home
In my apron! Esther become wife to Hans! [*laughs.*]
Hans husband unto Esther! [*laughs.*] Husband! [*laughs.*] Husband!

*Enter* MADAME ROSELHEIM.

*Mad. Ros.* Why, Esther, what 's the matter?
*Esther* [*still laughing*]. I'm laughing!
*Mad. Ros.* I see you are. What makes you laugh?

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*Esther.* [*laughing*]. A thought
That came into my head.
*Mad. Ros.* Dismiss it then—
Behoves you to be busy with grave matters.
Your master leaves us. He is summon'd hence
By sudden requisition of high duty.
*Esther.* How soon ?
*Mad. Ros.* At once. Prepare for his departure.
*Esther.* Goes Meeta with him ?
*Mad. Ros.* No, nor any one.
A secret mission takes him for the service
Of her, the Royal dame, who was his mistress.
*Esther.* And how will Meeta bear it ?
*Mad. Ros.* As she ought.
Meeta knows nothing paramount to duty.
*Esther.* And this to fall upon the very eve
Of her wedding. Will it stop it ?
*Mad. Ros.* I don't know.
*Esther.* I hope it will not ; I have fear of crosses
In all such matters.
*Mad. Ros.* Thinkest thou of weddings?
*Esther.* Madam ! [*Stifling a laugh.*
*Mad. Ros.* Why, Esther, what's the matter with you ?
*Esther.* Nothing !—That is—Unless I laugh I'll die !
[*Goes out, laughing immoderately.*
*Mad. Ros.* What's come to her ? 'Tis not her mood
to laugh—
At such a time too. But I have not thought
To waste on her. A dangerous mission this —
A search unauthorized ; and that, with foes
On every side of him. The reverend man
For duty puts his life in jeopardy,
Nor pauses, but as soon as call'd obeys.
His daughter on the eve of marriage too,
As Esther said—her bridegroom daily look'd for,
My son, my Rupert—fit to mate a princess,
But yet more fitly with sweet Meeta match'd,
In virtue without peer ! Will he postpone
Their nuptials ? No, he will not, if I know him.
But whatsoever he resolves is wise ;
For piety is still the good man's law. [*Goes out.*

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SCENE II.—*A Room in* MUHLDENAU'S *House.*

*Enter* MUHLDENAU.

*Muhl.* Meeta! I thought she was alone with me!
No wonder if the news transfixes her
With deep abstraction, newly told; when I,
Already in possession on't, alike
Forget myself! Why, Meeta! Come, my child.
*Meeta* [*entering*]. And must you go?
*Muhl.* The voice that calls me hence
I never disobey'd—durst disobey!
Thou art here in safety. This, thy father's will,
From want assures thee—leaves thee heir indeed
To modest competence. Thy nuptials too,
Which, for this chance I would not have postponed,
Give thee a father in a husband. Thus
Absolved from care on thy account, I go;
For thou art good, my child, and hast beside
A Father whom thou lovest to obey,
With power no less than will to guard his child,
That trusts in him—in every place at hand,
At every hour—the Father of thy father!
In whose strong hands, and pitiful as strong,
I leave thee, saying, "Let his will be done!"
*Meeta.* Will you be long away?
*Muhl.* Not long, I hope;
Not very long. What call you long, my child?
A year?
*Meeta.* O, not a year!
*Muhl.* No! no! No fear
Of that.—No; certainly I shall not be
A year away.
*Meeta.* Not half a year?
*Muhl.* Not half
A year.
*Meeta.* Half that?
*Muhl.* I know not, but should think
A lapse more brief should bring me home again.
*Meeta.* Perhaps a month?
*Muhl.* Perhaps; but graver things
Lie in the hands of seconds. Yea; a second

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Might balk departure, yet remove me from thee,
Never again to meet thee—in this world—
In this world, Meeta! so, think less of absence,
That here hath termination.
*Meeta.* Is the mission
That takes you, dangerous?
*Muhl.* I'll not deceive you:
It is.
*Meeta.* Sweet Heaven have mercy!
*Muhl.* It is well
To call for that—but better 'tis to know
That what Heaven wills is right!—believe in that,
Thou'lt find it in the end to thy account.
But what is danger? Is't always the thing
We call so? Sin is danger, certainly,
Putting in jeopardy man's proper life,
The life to come!—but what is danger else?
'Tis hard to say! Of this, howe'er, be sure,
More oft it wears a smooth face than a rough,
So for the most part found when least expected,
And fatalest! The storms that are foretold
Are easiest met—the reefs avoided
That raise the ripple! He did not feast that night
Who saw the writing, to the prophet's mind
Explain'd alone, although reveal'd to all;
And while the impious revel yet held on
The flood did turn its wave, to let the surge
Of battle in, and ruin overthrew
Him and his kingdom! Hear me, Meeta; glad
This summons makes me, tho' it threatens danger:
And, for I know that it will hearten thee
To bear my absence, I will tell thee why.
Sit down, my child. Thou hadst a sister, Meeta.
*Meeta.* A sister!
*Muhl.* I have kept the knowledge from thee,
To save the questioning had follow'd it,
And could not be replied to without cost
Of suffering, while recollection of
Bereavement yet was young.
*Meeta.* I had a sister?
*Muhl.* You had a sister.

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*Meeta.* Had?
*Muhl.* Had, Meeta.
*Meeta.* Had!
Alas! was I so rich, and knew it not?
I had a sister! O what light and warmth
Of love, I never knew before, the thought
Hath shot into my soul!—And now—and now,
All 's strangely dark and cold! How is it, father,
I had a sister, and remember not?
*Muhl.* Because 'twas in thy childhood, Meeta, when
The memory, too tender, yields impressions
Their causes ta'en away.—And yet there was
A time thou didst remember such a thing!
*Meeta.* Was there? O heartless Meeta! Once remember
She had a sister, and forget it ever!
*Muhl.* Thou hast forgot the siege of Magdeburgh.
*Meeta.* No! I remember that! I never hear
The thunder, but I think of that!—or see
The lightning set the sky on fire, but that
Comes back to me!—No!—no!—I recollect
The siege of Magdeburgh!
*Muhl.* How long did it last?
*Meeta.* One night.
*Muhl.* Three months!
*Meeta.* I only recollect
One night—and it was in the street, and men
With horrid looks and yells ran to and fro!
On horseback some, and some on foot—some firing,
And some with swords which they did whirl and dart
As they moved on.
*Muhl.* Ay! mercy shewed they not
That night to man or woman!
*Meeta.* Woman? No!
I saw them seize one by the hair!—I am sure
I did!
*Muhl.* You did—you told me so yourself.
*Meeta.* I told you so myself?
*Muhl.* You have forgot!
And can you wonder? You were barely then
Turn'd five years old. Were you not near that woman?

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*Meeta.* Yes! close to her! I had a hold of her.
*Muhl.* That too you told me. Do you not remember?
*Meeta.* No.
*Muhl.* No!—not when I found thee in the street
Wandering alone, and 'twixt thy sobbings, on
Thy father calling?
*Meeta.* No.
*Muhl.* Thou told'st it me
The following day, and often afterwards.
I let the fruitless inquisition drop,
So memory fell asleep! Remember'st aught
That woman carried?
*Meeta.* Carried?
*Muhl.* Carried.
*Meeta.* No.
*Muhl.* She was thy sister's nurse.
*Meeta.* It was a child
She carried! Was it? Yes—I see it now
In her arms, as plain as I see you. O, heart!
What hast thou been about! All 's clear as noon!—
A child she carried, and it was my sister!
I recollect my sister! Were they killed?
*Muhl.* The woman was.
*Meeta.* And not my sister?
*Muhl.* That
Knows Heaven alone! That night of carnage over,
We search'd the street—the woman's body found,
But of thy little sister not a trace!
*Meeta.* And you did search the street?—She was not kill'd!
Had she been kill'd, her body had been found
Sure as the nurse's—Yes!—and I have heard
Nine times in ten, when caught in mortal strait
A woman with an infant in her arms,
Altho' she lose herself, will save her load!
She was not kill'd, for didn't I escape!
I that did wail and clamour as you say!—
They hurt not me whom else soe'er they hurt;
And would they harm a little speechless child,
As like to smile at them as look afraid;
To come to them, if it could walk, as fly?

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'Tis not in mortal man that has his wits,
To slay a little harmless, witless child!
To wound it, scratch it!—I would stake my life
She was not kill'd—Some one did snatch her up—
Take her away—put in a place of safety—
God bless him! cherishes her now perhaps
As if she were his own! Do you not think
She is alive?—I'm sure she is alive;
I have a sister still!

*Muhl.* Thy sanguine heart
A little light enlarges into day.
It is thy father's nature which thou hast,
Uncheck'd in thee, in him subdued by time.
Now see'st thou why this summons is a thing
To welcome? Hitherto my debt to thee,
My yearnings for my lost one still has held
In check—yes, yearnings, Meeta; for I own
The likeness, tho' a faint one, of thy hope,
Touching thy sister, round thy father's heart
Hath ever hung! but now that I am call'd,
Commanded—for 'tis even so, my child—
To leave thee—tho' the track I must pursue
Borders with danger, yet it is a journey
I undertake more pleased, than I 'd forego!
For—if we may believe in presages—
And wherefore not if we believe at all,
As who shall shape and bound the ways of heaven—
To other issue than its proper one?
And nearer to myself this mission leads—
Perhaps concerning thee!—perhaps—Yes, Meeta,
I cannot help the thought, for, next to thee,
It is the stay of my old age—perhaps
Concerning—

*Meeta.* My lost sister.

*Muhl.* Yes, my child,
Not dead, I do believe, but lost. How well
You reason'd on 't! The body was not found:
A nurse, as thou didst say, will lose herself,
Yet save her load—'tis not, I do believe,
In flesh and blood to slay a little child:
You 're right, the child was saved—is living yet!

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You have made your father turn a boy again!
Well, be it so! I do believe it, Meeta!
You are content, my child, to let me go?
*Meeta.* I am, sir—that is, not, as at the first,
My heart grows sick at thought of losing you.
Couldn't I go too?—No—no!—There is danger,
And that's my answer. Farewell, father!—There!
We'll say good-bye at once!
*Muhl.* Not yet, my child!
Should'st thou require a friend when I'm away,
Here is the name of one. He lives in Prague:
He is a Jew.
*Meeta.* A Jew?
*Muhl.* He'll give thee counsel,
Shouldst thou have need of it.
*Meeta.* A Jew?
*Muhl.* Or if
Thy funds run low in sudden exigence,
He'll help them mount again.
*Meeta.* A Jew?
*Muhl.* Why not?
*Meeta.* And I a Christian father's child!
*Muhl.* Is not
A Jew a man? Wouldst thou, a Christian, help
A Jew, that's of thy creed an enemy?
*Meeta.* I would!
*Muhl.* And why not then a Jew help thee?
I know a reason; but the blame on't lies
Not on the other side. It is the race
Elect from all mankind, whose course is mark'd
From youngest time by high behests from Heaven,
By miracles and oracles, and deeds
Of mighty men who put their trust therein!
Don't fear thy father's friend!—Don't fear the Jew!
*Meeta.* I am corrected, sir.—I shall observe.
*Muhl.* Here comes thy Rupert's mother—and in time.

*Enter* MADAME ROSELHEIM.

My absence, madam, need not be a let
To stay my daughter's nuptials with thy son.
I know a soldier's time is not his own;

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And what is granted him, behoves him use.
So, Meeta, do not wait for my return,
If past the time delay'd—Farewell, my child!
Madam, farewell!—We are in the hands of Heaven!
[*Goes out; and* MEETA, *after a struggle, falls weeping upon the neck of* MADAME ROSELHEIM.

---

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—MUHLDENAU'S *Garden.*

*Wreaths of flowers hung from the branches of the trees—rustic seats here and there, ornamented.*

*Enter* ESTHER *and* HANS.

*Hans.* Now, Esther, have I pleased you? Is there aught
I have forgotten? The garlands properly disposed,
The seats in order, and the company,
Bid as you told me? There's the music too,
Three fiddles—first and second, and a bass,
A hautboy, flute and harp! Are you not pleased?
Look pleased! Do, Esther! Seldom do you smile
On me; and welcomer than Christmas day,
Or New-Year's day, or any day o' the year,
Were one kind look from Esther.

*Esther.* To say truth,
You have managed finely!

*Hans.* Law! how sweet you smile!
What's honey now? I wouldn't take a hive
To pay for't with that smile! Indeed, I wouldn't,
In very deed, I wouldn't—and I'm fond
Of honey! furious fond of it. O dear!
A thing so sweet to see, what must it be
To taste? O happy days of boyhood, when
Whatever I did right was sure to get me
A kiss from my mother. Times are changed with Hans;
Do what he may, he gets no kisses now.

*Esther.* Now he wants me to kiss him!—So.—Good Hans,

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'Tis not with men, you know, as 'tis with boys:
Kisses do come to boys, but men must fetch them.
*Hans.* But knew I I could get them—I would fetch them!
*Esther.* Why, Hans, how can you know unless you try?
*Hans.* Unless I try!—Now mean you what you say?
*Esther.* Why say it else?
*Hans.* And they'll be had by fetching?
*Esther.* A fool may tell they'll not be had without.
*Hans.* O Esther!
*Esther.* Well!
*Hans.* Would I could hear thee say,
"O Hans!"
*Esther.* O Hans!—There, I've said it!—Well?
*Hans.* Durst I but try? But then there is the fear!
*Esther.* And there's the hope! the flower beside the weed.
*Hans.* O Esther!—Oh.
*Esther.* O Hans!
*Hans.* Give me a kiss!
*Esther.* Fool!—said I not before,
Men must fetch kisses, tho' to boys they come?
*Hans.* O would you fancy me a boy!
*Esther.* I do;
Not only fancy thee, but know thee one!
*Hans.* Then treat me as a boy.
*Esther.* How?
*Hans.* As you said
Just now that boys were treated.
*Esther.* As I live,
He'd have it come from me! What said I now?
*Hans.* You said that kisses come to boys.
*Esther.* I did;
And so do railings, cuffs, and fifty things
That are not half so sweet.—Did I not say
The dance was to be practised? Where are then
The partners? Where's the music? In a minute
The bridegroom comes, when all should be prepared,
Is't then a time make ready? Well! Don't stand
With gaping mouth when busy hands are needed—
Fetch here the dancers and the music.

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*Hans* [*without moving*]. Yes.
*Esther*. Is that the way to do it? Will they come
With only saying "Yes"? Art thou a post?
*Hans*. In sooth I know not what I am! I know
I'm not myself! I may be man or woman,
A fish or a brute beast, a stone, or log
Of wood, for what I care! I would 'twere now
All over with me, and the coroner
Were sitting on me! It will come to that!
I'll do thy bidding—then I'll go and die—
I will! I'll tie me a true-lover's knot,
You'll see I will—Good bye!—
*Esther* [*stamping*]. Hans!
*Hans*. Well?
*Esther*. Have here
The dancers, ere I stamp my foot again.
*Hans*. I fly. [*Goes out.*
*Esther*. Poor Hans! The boy is deep in love!
How have I managed to light up this flame?
"Heigho-ho!" "O dear!" The simpleton, I vow,
Grows interesting. I should grieve for Hans,
Were aught to happen to him. It is hard
To be the bane of a poor fellow's peace,
Much more to be the death of him! Should he go
And drown himself! or hang himself indeed!
Hans! [*calling*] I could never bear myself again!
To see him laid out in his shroud! Hans! Hans! [*calling*]
To follow the poor fellow to his grave—
To see him lower'd into 't.—Why, Hans! [*calling*] I hear
The earth upon his coffin! Hans, I say!
Where are you?
*Hans* [*entering with dancers*]. Here! Is any thing the matter,
You call'd me in a tone of such distress?
*Esther* [*recovering herself*]. Am I not in a hurry, and you take
An hour and more to do a minute's work!
*Hans*. I'm sure I'm hardly gone a minute.
*Esther*. Fool!
You cannot tell a minute from an hour!

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*Hans.* Here are the dancers and the music, but
One partner is a-wanting.
*Esther.* You stand up!
*Hans.* It is a woman's wanting.
*Esther.* 'Tis no matter,
Take you her place.
*Hans.* I'll do whate'er you bid me,
But 'tis too bad to make a woman of me.
*Esther* [*impatiently*]. Are you ready?
*Hans.* Yes! I'll dance him till I tire him.

[*Dance.* HANS *exerts himself to the utmost, constantly looking towards* ESTHER, *who gradually becomes pleased, and still more and more enjoys his vivacity. His partner gives up, and* HANS *dances by himself before* ESTHER, *who humours his steps. The others at length dance off.*

*Hans.* Danced I to please you?
*Esther.* Yes; and there—your thanks. [*Kisses him.*
*Hans.* And there are yours for paying me so well!
[*Kissing again.*
Mars! if I haven't kissed her!
*Esther.* Hans! Why, Hans!
*Hans.* Nay, don't be angry! All the blame was yours;
You kiss'd me first. 'Twas only kiss for kiss!
*Esther.* Here's some one coming! Why, you idle boy!
Nothing within, without the house, to do,
That you are standing here? No plate to clean?
No knives and forks? no furniture to polish?
No glasses nor decanters to be rinsed,
And dried, and clear'd? When put you last to rights
Your pantry? 'Twas in wond'rous order when
I look'd into it yesterday! Go, sir;
A gaping mouth won't serve for busy hands!
To work, I say! Do you hear me, boy?
*Hans.* I do,
Yet hardly can believe it.
*Esther.* Hence. To work! [HANS *goes out.*
*Mad. Ros.* [*entering*]. To work? Why, Esther, 'tis a holiday!

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Knew you what you were saying? Do you hear me?
Esther turn'd girl! May I believe my eyes—
And they have never fail'd me yet—I saw thee
Kiss the lad Hans just now?
*Esther.* 'Twas he kiss'd me.
*Mad. Ros.* You first kiss'd him.
*Esther.* Well, if I did, I did.
He danced just now, and pleased me 'twas so well—
And so I kiss'd him, as a woman may
A boy!
*Mad. Ros.* You are right; you might have said a child:
Hans is no more.
*Esther.* Hans no more than a child?
He's twenty-five—he says so—next birth-day.
A pretty child indeed! If he's a child,
Children are marriageable! Such a child
My mother's husband was, when birth of me
Made him a father.
*Mad. Ros.* Be not angry, Esther;
I did not say of Hans he was too young
To be a husband—if you fancy him.
*Esther.* I fancy Hans? I fancy living man,
And Hans especially! I, that am gall
At very thought a man should be my master!
I, to whom never ventured man to say
Soft thing a second time—and those have tried
Who have back'd furious seas, and shown a front
To bayonet points and loaded cannon mouths—
And I to fancy Hans! I thank you, ma'am.
Dress up a girl in boy's clothes for me, do,
And send her me for husband! Hans indeed
To call me wife! I to call Hans my husband!
How I should like to hear myself! I'll marry
When it rains husbands; but it shan't be Hans!
*Mad. Ros.* Well, Esther, do not fret.
*Esther.* I fret! I think
I see myself! Fret about Hans! I know
You did but jest. It was a rare conceit
To say I'd marry Hans [*laughs*]. I'll kill myself
With laughing at the thought. Esther to marry—
And Hans, of all mankind!

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*Mad. Ros.* You are right. 'Twas jest!
I have always set you down for an old maid.
Go see if Meeta 's ready.

*Esther* [*aside*]. An old maid!
Thank heaven I'm only five-and-thirty yet.
Old maid indeed, and only thirty-five!
I yet may live to be a grandmother! [*Goes out.*

*Mad. Ros.* No sign of Rupert yet, and noon is past.
He will not come. These nuptials will be stopp'd.
Her father's summons boded, as I thought,
No good. There is in the affairs of life,
As in the atmosphere, a season, where
To shining day succeedeth shining day;
But once the weather breaks, 'tis cloud and cloud,
And long-deferr'd and slow the clearing up.

*Enter* Messenger *with letters, and retires.*

From Rupert! I was right—he will not come:
The field is ta'en a month before the time.
His leave has been recall'd. Poor Meeta! Go
Undress thee, girl! Thy gear of every day
Belongs to this on which thou thought'st to wear
The brightest suit that virginhood puts on!
This is to Meeta—from her father? No—
The hand is strange! Why, who should write to her
Except her father? About whom but him
Or Rupert should she hear, and he has told
His errand in my letter! If it speaks
About her father, harm has fall'n upon him!
And what will Meeta do? A solid mind—
But has to learn to bear a father's ills!
What can have chanced? Perhaps imprisonment!
Not death? O no! not death! It cannot be!
Heaven, for his child's sake, for his own, will spare him.
[*Goes out.*

## SCENE II.—MEETA'S *Dressing-room.*

MEETA *and* ESTHER *enter—the former abstracted, the latter making a bridal knot.*

*Esther.* No favour for your breast! A bride, and go
To church without a favour! Well! to think

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Of all things *that* should be forgot! Almost
As well forget your wedding-day itself!
Almost as well no wedding as no favour!
Know'st thou not so? [*Touching her.*

*Meeta.* What said you to me, Esther?

*Esther.* There! I protest, as well it were the wall
I spoke to as to you! as much 'twould hear me.
*What said you to me Esther?* Esther said—
It was your wedding-day—that you forgot
A favour for your breast—that she would make one—
And here 'tis ready! Let me pin it on.

*Meeta.* No word yet from my father!

*Esther.* From your father?
Your lover, don't you mean?

*Meeta.* I mean my father.

*Esther.* Humph! Give me anything but want of nature!
I do not like you, Meeta! Flesh and blood
Are flesh and blood! Were it my wedding-day,
Almost the very hour, and every minute
The bridegroom look'd for, would I, think you, Meeta,
Be running on my father? I'll be honest:
I'd think of something dearer—that I would,
And be a good child still!

*Meeta.* You lost your father
When you were but an infant. You don't know
What 'tis to love a father.

*Esther.* Do I not?
Yes; but I do! It is to honour him,
So we are bidden—that is, to obey him—
Respectfully entreat him!

*Meeta.* Nothing more?

*Esther.* What more?

*Meeta.* O, much!—O, very much!—Such things
We do to persons are indifferent to us,
Or to their stations! There is something more—
Better—less earthly—more o' th' grain of Heaven—
A love that's indefinable!—that holds
Ourselves as nothing in respect of cherishing!
That still is kneeling tho' no limb be bent,
And looking up with ever-gushing will,



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Anticipating wishes!—It is worship—
Altho' no lip be moved, no eye be strain'd,
No hands be clasp'd—like that which hath acceptance
Above—O' the soul! O, how I love my father!
To say "before my life" is to say nothing—
That's his, and 'tis a gasp and over! but
To slave, beg, starve for him—forego possession
Of mine own dearest earthly wishes—havings—
I'd do it, Esther, in a moment!—Yes!
Not give 't a second thought! Remember'st thou
I once was froward with thee? I was then
A girl not ten years old—dost not remember?
I had found a hair of his—a long white hair,
And I had coil'd it up to keep for treasure;
But thou didst flout me for't and take't away,
And cast into the fire—whence all your might
It took to hold me. Yes, I would have thrust
My hand into the fire to save that hair!
That is to love a father!

*Esther.* If it is,
Then know I not what is the love of one.

*Meeta.* You never knew one, said I not before?
But mine was twice a parent—that is, Esther,
He was my father and my mother too.
I never knew my mother, but I am sure
I should have loved her—dearly loved her, Esther;
But my father—nurse was he to me, instructor,
Playmate, companion, father altogether!
Think of that, Esther. Playmate! Such a man
To dwindle into a child for my sake! There
I half believe I find the root of love
Which has struck deepest.—He to play the child
With his white hairs!—There is not one of them
But has a heart and soul in't—to me, Esther!—
Don't smile— You know you own you cannot tell
What 'tis to love a father.

*Enter* MADAME ROSELHEIM.

*Mad. Ros.* Meeta!

*Meeta.* Well,
Dear Madame Roselheim?

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*Mad. Ros.* The post is in.

*Meeta.* And Rupert does n't come? — I thought 'twould be so!

I was prepared for it! I wish'd it—tho'
My father will'd our nuptials should go on.
'Tis well! O, if there be one hour, which more
Than any other craves a parent's presence,
'Tis that which gives his child away from him!
She should go with his blessing warm upon her, breathed
With an attesting kiss; then may she go
With perfect hope, and cheerly take with her
The benisons of all kind wishers else!—
You know I love your son?

*Mad. Ros.* [*Weeps.*] I know it well,
My Meeta.

*Meeta.* Madame!—Mother! I'm the bride—
You must not weep till I do!—'Tis not fair,
I'll not be beat in disappointment, I
That have chief cause to feel it! Is he ill?

*Mad. Ros.* No!—No!

*Meeta.* Thank Heaven! and yet some other cause
As grave as that of health perhaps prevents him?

*Mad. Ros.* No; the campaign has open'd—nothing more.

*Meeta.* Enough!—Long marches—nightly guards—chill sleeping
In the open fields—foragings—reconnoiterings—
Skirmishings—stormings and pitch'd battles! Rupert,
Poor Rupert—[*weeps*]—Mother, I am quits with you,
There are my tears 'gainst yours!

*Mad. Ros.* I wasn't weeping
For Rupert, Meeta.

*Meeta.* For whom, then?—My father?

*Mad. Ros.* For no one—that is, there's no cause I know of
Why I should weep.

*Meeta.* Why weep, then?

*Mad. Ros.* 'Twas a fear
I had——

*Meeta.* About my father?—Is that letter
For me?—that, that's unopen'd?—Give it me; don't fear.



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Tho' I'm a girl, I have a resolution. [*Reads letter.*]
Read it! [*Handing it to* MADAME ROSELHEIM.]
*Mad. Ros.* Arrested! and a prisoner
In Prague!—His fate uncertain—but his life
In peril, Meeta! [*Tottering as on the point of fainting.*]
*Meeta.* [*Trying to recover her.*] Mother!—Madame!
—Madame!—
Mother!—Madame Roselheim, don't give way!—these
things
Are catching, and I want to be myself!
I must be myself—I will be myself! I'll not waver,
Flinch, droop, the matter of a moment.—Madame!
I have need of all the nerve I have—and help me!
Don't take it from me!—My father wants it all,
And he must have it, and shall!—Well, well! give way!
The more you are water, the more will I be rock!
I am so!—Let me see——
*Mad. Ros.* My child!—my Meeta!
Thou show'st it not; but, if I feel the shock,
What must it prove to thee!
*Meeta.* Nothing, madame!—nothing!
Let's see——How many miles is Prague from this?
I recollect—that's right!—that's right!—I have
My senses all about me—I thank Heaven!—
The paper that he gave me?—It is here—
In my bosom!—I remember everything!—
I am quite myself!
*Mad. Ros.* Meeta! this calmness frights me!
*Meeta.* Don't mind it!—All is well!—I recollect,
To the very letter, all my father told me;
And I will do his bidding.—A fine time
'Twould be for me to swoon! [*laughs*]—a proper time!
[*laughs*]
I must not laugh; for if I do, I'm lost!
Heaven give me firmness!—Of myself, I'm nothing!
There!—'tis gone off. I'll but provide myself,
And away! [*going towards her chamber*].
*Mad. Ros.* Where go you, Meeta?
*Meeta.* Nowhere—nowhere,
Where any heed.
*Mad. Ros.* What go you, then, to do?

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*Meeta.* Nothing that matters aught—but change my dress.

*Mad. Ros.* But, Meeta!—

*Meeta.* Mother, let me have my way!—
Don't hinder me, and do not follow me!
Else that may come you would not wish to come!
Command me, after, all my life, so now
You suffer me be mistress of myself! [*Goes out.*]

*Mad. Ros.* She makes me tremble—she's so little moved!
Why, Esther! are you too about to swoon?

*Esther.* Almost I am!—My heart turn'd sick just now;
But it grows better.

*Mad. Ros.* What do you think of Meeta?

*Esther.* I wonder at her—but she's all a wonder!
Had you but heard her talk, ere you came in,
About her father!—

*Mad. Ros.* I'm afraid of her.
She is too calm—it is unnatural!—
She cannot be herself, thus to sustain
What taxes you and me too much, to whom
It comes not half so home!—She has not shed
A tear!—No sound of suffering—a moan,
A sigh—a breath, you could mistake for one—
Has 'scap'd her! She forbade me follow her;
But am I right to heed her? Reason is gone
Ere you suspect that it has given way,
So this collectedness may be but crust,
Not substance; which, while you believe it is,
It crumbles into dust! We should not leave her
Alone.

*Esther.* I heed her not!—I'll follow her! [*Going.*]

*Meeta.* [*Entering.*] Where are you going, Esther?

*Esther.* Into your chamber,
To look for you.

*Meeta.* Well!—here I am!—What want you?

*Esther.* Why, you are dress'd as 'twere to go a journey!

*Meeta.* I am.

*Mad. Ros.* And whither go you, Meeta?

*Meeta.* To
My father!

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*Mad. Ros.* Are you mad?
*Meeta.* I could be mad!
But I must keep my reason—and I will!
*Mad. Ros.* Reflect you on the distance?
*Meeta.* 'Tis a stride!
*Mad. Ros.* A stride! And do you calculate
The danger?
*Meeta.* There's no danger—none but that
In which he lies!
*Mad. Ros.* You may be stopp'd by robbers!
*Meeta.* There are no robbers.
*Mad. Ros.* Recollect the war!
*Meeta.* There is no war.
*Mad. Ros.* Know'st thou what thou art saying?
*Meeta.* I do,—believe it. 'Tis the shortest way.
Thou'lt have to take 't at last!
*Esther.* She shall not stir.
*Meeta.* Nay, but I will!—and go!
*Mad. Ros.* Don't let her, Esther;
Lay hold upon her.
*Esther.* Will I not!
*Meeta.* You will not!—
You must not!—you dare not! If you do, his blood
Lie at your door!
*Mad. Ros.* Alas! what power have you
To help him, child?
*Meeta.* My will!—Where there's the will,
You cannot tell but there may be the power!
Strong will can make a little power go far—
At least, can I not beg his enemies
To spare his life?
*Mad. Ros.* You'll find their hearts are stone.
*Meeta.* Perhaps; but I will try if they are flesh.
*Mad. Ros.* And if it prove they are not?
*Meeta.* Then, I'll deal
With his prison bolts and bars. Mother, 'tis vain!
Prevent me now, and I will 'scape again;
If not to-day, to-morrow. If not then,
The next day—or the following. So time
That's precious—every thing—is lost, and then
The mischief done, and no good come of it

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That might have come, were it done promptly, madam!
Mother, 'tis reason, plain to speculation,
As the hand I lift before you now to Heaven
To register my vow, that no regard
Of difficulty, or unlikelihood,
Or danger, or persuasion, or enforcement,
Shall hold me back one moment from the attempt
To save my father's life. Heaven bless you, madam!
Esther, good-bye! That's right—no weeping—nothing
But a kiss, and part!—Good-bye!—Good-bye!—
Good-bye!

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*A Room in* JOSEPH'S *House at Prague.*

*Enter* JOSEPH *and* AHAB.

*Ahab.* More gold!
*Jos.* Yes, Ahab, more! The dross is mine,
Thou only hast the custody, and yet
Thou yield'st it me as it were drops of blood
From thine own heart! I say, I want more gold,
And more to follow yet, if that suffice not;
And, failing gold, I'll coin my parchments, plate,
Jewels, and furniture—my very roof—
But I shall find supplies!
*Ahab.* And for a Christian?
*Jos.* Thou art my brother—Jew. What could'st thou more
Than risk thy life for mine?
*Ahab.* I do not know
What greater venture man can risk for man
Than his own life.
*Jos.* Would'st thou risk thine for me?
Thou art honest, Ahab, though thou lov'st thyself
Better than any living thing beside.
Thou pausest to consider! Do not pause,
'Tis waste of time which I will save thee. Ahab,
Thou would'st not risk thy life for me. Now mark,—
When I did suffer persecution,

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Ten years ago, in Spain,—when Christian men,
In their Master's name, did that which never yet
Their Master's precepts warranted—I say it,
For it is written, Ahab, written, plain
That he who runs may read—when Christian men
Gave human, living flesh to roast, because
We held the old faith and eschew'd the new,—
The Christian father of this Christian child
Did save my life at peril of his own!
Get the gold, Ahab! He did that for me,
That was not of his creed, thou would'st not do,
Who art of mine! Ahab, I felt it then,
The Master taught them right! He is my neighbour
That does a neighbour's office to me!
The gold, and plenty on't—a hundred ducats!

*Ahab.* A hundred ducats?

*Jos* 'Tis the twentieth part
Of what remains! A portion of his life
He did not risk, but all. Resolve at once
To do my bidding, else my mind may change,
And I may bid thee fetch the whole,—the whole!
A prompt compliance in a strait is best.
Where others have the power to make conditions,
Resistance tires forbearance. Fetch the gold,
For the sake of him who saved the hands that made it
From the fire.—Look here! they are not cinders, Ahab,
But flesh; and thank a Christian. Fetch the gold!

[AHAB *goes out.*

Poor girl! how she has wasted since she first
Came here: yet how her spirit lasts beyond
Her body: there she suffers no impairment.
My Rachel had been like her had she lived,—
The face reminds me of her as it shines
From the thick bower of her raven hair,
When now and then by chance I see it down!

*Enter* MEETA.

What news, my girl?

*Meeta.* None!—I have sped to-day
As yesterday! The names of "father,"—"child,"
Seem here to carry to men's hearts no import

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Past that of lightest words. They hardly win
An audience for me. When they do, the eye
Of the listener, every other moment caught
By passing trivial'st things, admonishes
My tongue it only wastes an earnest suit
Upon a heedless ear. Once, as I thought,
An auditor was moved,—almost he seem'd
To give me hope,—I felt as if about
To cross the threshold of the prison, and
Blessings and thanks rose in my throat so thick,
That utterance did suffocate, and, but
For tears that sudden came to my relief,
I had fallen at his feet,—yet at that very moment
Some antic feat I saw not, but a wretch
Did practise within view, convulsed him straight
With laughter, 'mid the peals of which he left me,
As I had ne'er been standing there! A clap
Of thunder had not stunn'd me half so much.

*Jos.* Was he a sentinel?

*Meeta.* He was.

*Jos.* I wonder
What sentinel did keep his heart, to let
Incontinent and ribald folly in,
And pity standing weeping at the door!

*Meeta.* They are all alike! See.
[*Showing an empty purse.*

*Jos.* Thou hast emptied it?
Well, I can fill it again!

*Meeta.* All gone, and naught
To show for it: a heart-full, too, of prayers!

*Jos.* I fear there is no hope!

*Meeta.* Don't say it! Though
For so far we have found men's hearts but stones,
Still will we turn them up. It cannot be
But we shall light on one that's flesh and blood.
I won't believe it! Yea, though from my hand
The hundred thousandth one dropp'd dead as flint,
I'd go to the next as though the human touch
Might meet me there! No! while my father lives,
I'll never give up hope to save his life!

*Jos.* A girl—and proof against despondence thus!



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*Meeta.* I often fear you deem me hard of heart.
Perhaps you think I do not weep enough?
It is not that I could not weep—it is
That I won't weep—that I won't give way—that I'll keep
My spirit up—my thoughts about me—waste
Naught that my father wants. I can't afford
To be a child, and melt. No! I must be
A deliverer, and proof to dissolvement
As a rock! I have not shed a single tear
But as a prayer—except to-day, when I gasp'd,
And must have wept or dropp'd, and even then
It came of itself! Thou said'st just now thou fear'd'st
There was no hope? but there is! I came resolved
To keep it from thee, promise had so oft
Enticed belief to balk it. I have a chance
To see the daughter of the Governor.

*Jos.* How came this blessed chance?

*Meeta.* Ha! blessed, sayst thou?—
Perhaps 'twill prove so!—The poor human heart,
How it doth build, and build on slightest grounds!
Words dropp'd by chance to pass for prophecies!
We'll pray it may be bless'd—we then may hope it!
Well, I will tell you.

*Jos.* Hope begins to dawn!

*Meeta.* Didn't I say there was no fear of hope?
I went, as every day I yet have done,
To the Governor's. The man that oped the gate
Was a new warder. A new face, new hope!
I told my tale, and when 'twas done implored him
Prefer my poor petition to his lady,
To grant me briefest audience.

*Jos.* To the daughter
Of the Governor?

*Meeta.* To her.

*Jos.* I see: go on!

*Meeta.* Like all the rest, he show'd—not plainly tho',
But by a hint—that charities were things
Of cost, and must be bought with more than thanks.
My purse was officeless, my last balk'd suit
Had of its trust absolved it quite—a wretch

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Who bragg'd, to win my bribe, a power he had not,
And added savage mockery to the wrong!
I pleaded destitution. "What," he cried,
"No toy, no trinket, you could turn to coin!"
And rudely snatching from its place my hood,
Which I had just unloosed, for want of air—
"Ha!" he exclaim'd, "what costly treasure's this!"
As, by the action from its band released,
My hair fell all around me!

*Jos.* Thereof make they
High traffic. I have known a head of hair,
Of ordinary goodliness, to bring
A common peasant maid a little dower!
There scarce were price a woman might not set
On one so rich as thine.

*Meeta.* Indeed! I would
I then had known its value—I had made
A surer bargain.

*Jos.* Durst he ask it of thee?
Wretch! He shall never have it! Thou shalt take
A purse of ducats to him.

*Meeta.* It is his
Already. I did let him sever it,
As only 'twere the string that held it up,
And gave it to him.

*Jos.* Was not I at hand
To fill thy purse? A quarter of an hour
Had ta'en thee here and back.

*Meeta.* And in that time
His mind had changed, or he had been removed,
And in his place another put, and all
Had been to do again, and that, perhaps
With lessen'd chance.—Had he ask'd me for a limb
He had had it—had it!—not one precious moment
Had I staid haggling with him. It had gone
As the hair of my head—aye—as a single hair.
'Tis time I go—

*Enter* AHAB.

*Ahab.* Dispatches have arriv'd.

*Meeta.* They bring the order for my father's death.
I see it! Say it. You cannot tell me worse
Than I know.

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*Ahab.* The news is bad.
*Meeta.* I'll not give up
While there is chance the substance of a thread—
A film. Altho' a thousand emperors
Had sworn against the life of his grey hairs,
While it is in them, I will try and save them!
*Jos.* Thou lookest faint! Some wine will hearten thee.
*Meeta.* I'll have no wine but such as I draw hence,
From my heart! There's not such wine in all thy house
To strengthen me! There's plenty and to spare!
What time is he to die?
*Jos.* Tell her. No use
Withhold it from her. Her spirit is the arch
Which gaineth strength by that which burdens it.
*Ahab.* He is to die within three days, altho'
The Governor did so report his case
As might have gain'd for him a milder doom.
*Meeta.* Did he? Did the Governor? Did you say
The Governor his case reported kindly?
The Governor? he?—he that's here?—here now
In Prague?—the very Governor of Prague?
*Ahab.* The same; but some severe reverse, they say,
Our arms have met with, so have overcast
The imperial mind, that clemency is quench'd
And thus thy father's death, alas, decreed!
*Meeta.* I would be here and twenty leagues from this.
*Jos.* Why twenty leagues from this?
*Meeta.* That distance lives
A friend might give me help.
*Jos.* Then suffer me
To be thy second self, and see that friend.
*Meeta.* He is an enemy to Prague.
*Jos.* And Prague
An enemy to thee—and I 'm thy friend!
Trust me, my child.
*Meeta.* My father told me this,
O thou good man—thou Christian!—Pardon me.
*Jos.* Pardon thee, child? I thank and honour thee:
Thou canst not praise me more than call me that
Thy conscience thinketh best.
*Meeta.* Then come with me,

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And I 'll instruct thee on the way. 'Tis time
I see the servant of the Governor.
Three days we have from this—that 's three whole days—
He dies on Saturday—[*Ruminating*]—He cannot die!
[*They go out.*

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SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the* GOVERNOR'S.

*Enter* BARON IDENSTEIN *and* ADOLPHA.

*Iden.* Indeed, indeed, it was not wisely done?
'Tis wrong that pity should be sufferer
By her sweet nature, as she is, enduring
Her gentle throes in vain—which are relieved
When of avail to those for whom they 're borne,
Else, pain incontinently! 'Twas not right
To promise audience to her, her affliction
Past help. What canst thou give her but thy tears,
And what are they? They cannot ope for her
Her father's prison door, nor wash away
The writing of the warrant which decrees
His term of life. Thou should'st have sent her word
"It could not be." "It was of no avail."
'Twas rending thy own heart, without repair
Of hers. 'Twas idle waste of agony.
'Twas feeding hope thou knew'st was sure to die!
*Adol.* Is there no hope?
*Iden.* There! were it fate herself
Said "No," thy sanguine nature would not rest,
But ask again with thought she 'd change her mind.
His fate is fix'd—within three days he dies.
*Adol.* On Saturday?
*Iden.* Yes; Saturday's the day.
*Adol.* Take me from Prague! I would not be in Prague
That day! I see the reverend old man
Dragging along the street, as on the day
I saw him first—by accident approaching
The casement as he pass'd!—his silver'd head

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Uncover'd, an unseemly sight! beset,
As 'twas, by fierce array of threatening arms,
In hands wherein the pith of life was fresh,
Which better far it had become to give
Protection to him than oppose offence.
'Twas only for a moment, but the form
Of the old man has never left me since.
I will not be in Prague the day he dies;
I wish I could forget when that day comes!—
What day is this?—When will be Saturday?
O to have time, 'twixt this and after then,
A blank, that I might pass that cruel day,
Nor know on't till 'twas gone!

*Iden.* My sweet Adolpha,
A strange and wond'rous compound is thy heart,
Frame of all moods, from gravest to most light,
And all in like extreme! Thy mirth defies
All other wing! thy sadness dives a depth
Where none can follow thee! No eye such stores
Of tears, no cheek such treasury of smiles!
Most natures have their bias, thine hath none,
Save goodness which directs and poises all!
My love! thou shalt not be in Prague, that day.

*Adol.* But must it come?

*Iden.* See there again! Thy heart
Will take no answer, save what pleases it,
And yet it knows as well as I do know
It cannot have.

*Adol.* My father's Governor!

*Iden.* The Emperor is his master.

*Adol.* Let him be!
Were I my father, in a case like this,
I would gainsay the Emperor—refuse
To do his bidding, or evade obedience—
Do anything but take the old man's life!
'Tis murder, Idenstein! He was no spy!
Came on no hostile mission! nothing did
Could threaten damage to the Emperor's cause—
Only fulfill'd an act of private duty,
To her whom once he served! Why should he die
For that? What reason that a giant hand

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Be laid on him to crush him to the grave!
A breach of duty were true duty here
Where duty, done, is breach of everything.
For all thou say'st, I can't believe he'll die,
Knowing, as I know, he has no right to die!
I'll see my father.

*Iden.* To counsel treason to him?

*Adol.* That is not treason which is not unright?
[*Goes out.*

*Iden.* Her virtuous will, will never own a let;
What she desires, she ever doth infer
The power to do. (*Listens.*) Ha!—Now she pleads to him.
That were well urged, if earnestly were well!—
I do not hear his answer, but by the tone
'Tis "No!" She comes to the attack again!
A friend in need, Adolpha, with a chance
In thy favour—thou hast none!—Again, I guess
His answer by the tone!—He will not yield—
Nor still will she give up—no advocate
Like one that pleads with heart!—What! Tears?—I'm sure
She weeps!—This rain, Adolpha, won't avail!
Duty's a stern defendant; thou must lose
Thy suit;—here comes the governor!—Kind heart!
What sun is there!—No cloud can keep it out;
But lower it ne'er so thick, some beam breaks thro'.

*Enter* General Kleiner.

*Gen. Kle.* I can't endure it!—won't—Give me a siege,
With a starved garrison and gaping breach!
Foundations honeycomb'd with mines!—the foe
A hundred men to one!—Or give me a battle
With bayonets cross'd, and cannon mouth to mouth,
And I 'm myself! I know my duty, and
Can act the man!—but save me from the eyes
Of a woman, when she weeps, and I the cause,
And cannot stop her tears!—'Sdeath! would they drown,
I 'd thank them! In the name of patience, why
Cannot one make a woman list to reason?

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Why does that drive her mad which keeps us sane?
Talk reason to her, and her wits are gone!
'Sdeath! I can govern Prague; but not a woman!
*Iden.* Why, what has happen'd, General?
*Gen. Kle.* Don't call
Me General!—call your wife General!—she knows
My duty better than I know it myself!
Tell her of customs, order, penalties,—
You talk of things that she can treat as the thread
She cuts with her hus'ife scissors! I have served
For fifty years—for more than half that time
Have managed men by units, tens, and hundreds,
And tens of hundreds!—I can't rule a woman!
Rule her?—that 's not the question!—would it were!
She must rule me!
*Iden.* But what's the matter?
*Gen. Kle.* Matter?
That wife of yours—that girl—that waxen doll—
Adolpha! Is she not your wife; and don't
You know it? Did you ever say her "nay,"
And prosper?—ever know her to give up
The point her heart was fix'd on? She 'd make hay
In December! Mars—a profitable wife!
She 'd have the Helder thaw with a north wind
In January, when the frost doth bite
With all its teeth! She 'd stop the tide half in,
When it runs strongest. She would stop the sun,
The moon, and all the stars!
*Iden.* What has she done, sir?
*Gen. Kle.* Desired me ope the prison-door that 's shut
By the Emperor's order—let its tenant out—
Laugh at the warrant for his death, that 's seal'd
By the Emperor's hand! When I refuse her that—
Which, did I grant her, I should lose my head,
And that were falling somewhat grievously
Short of my due proportions—she insists
Upon a respite, while she goes herself
To plead his cause before the Emperor!
She 'd do it! And when I refuse her that,
She prays me set my wits to work, and pass
A fiction off for fact—not killing him,

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Altho' he seem to die! She 'd make me out
A necromancer! When she 's balk'd of that—
Which on as valid reason I refuse,
As one to weave with gyves upon hi s hands
She opens on me volleys of loud sobs,
With showers of tears, that try my mettle more
Than hail of lead! I wish you 'd rule your wife—
Cut her right short, when she 's unreasonable—
Say "No" to her, and nothing else for a year!
You spoil her, Idenstein!—A woman never
Should have her own way!

*Iden.* Sir, you gave it her
Before I did.

*Gen. Kle.* A fool, sir, has a use!
He is a beacon to a man that 's wise
Enough to profit by him.

*Iden.* All her fault
Is but excess of too sweet nature, sir,
Which ever makes another's griefs her own.

*Gen. Kle.* And mine, too! Punishment is done away
In Prague! Offenders 'scape, or I must smart
For their penalties! Nor ends it there. No ache,
For ten miles round, but I must share a twinge,
Chance it to come unto her knowledge!—I
Expire with woes of orphans, widows, maids
Forsaken, wives in childbirth—all degrees
Of human, female sufferings—I am *in*
*Articulo mortis*, every day of my life,
And not a pang my own!

*Iden.* And then you die, sir,
A good man's death with benisons all round you.

*Gen. Kle.* I'd waive the benisons to 'scape the death!

*Iden.* Indeed—I know you better, sir!—you would not.

*Gen. Kle.* I would!—But who comes here?

*Iden.* As I believe,
The daughter of the prisoner, Sir. Adolpha
Has promised her an audience.

*Gen. Kle.* We are attack'd
In flank and rear—Tell her it won't avail!
Persuade her to retreat! Say we have taken
Our ground and we will keep it, stand or fall!

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*Iden.* Had not you better do it, sir?
*Gen. Kle.* Not I!
I'm a recruit against their mode of fighting.
[*Retires hastily, and sits down near a table.*

*Enter* MEETA *and a* Servant.

*Serv.* [*Speaking low to* MEETA.] I'll tell her you are here. [*Goes out.*
*Iden.* You wish to see
The daughter of the Governor?
*Meeta.* I come
To see her. I am promised I should see her.
She said it, as I am informed,—indeed
As I am sure she did. She is a lady:
She cannot break her word. A noble lady,
She would not break her word. A lady, sweet
And pitiful—she will not break her word!
*Iden.* She will not; but I pray you, for her sake,
Absolve her from it and forego your suit,
Which will avail you nought. It will not lead
To what you want; what is the worth on't then?
And wherefore should'st thou urge it?
*Meeta.* I am come
To see the daughter of the Governor;
Come on her promise, as I have been told,
And thou just now hast granted. If she wills
To break her word, then as I came I go!
But if she waits for me to give it back,
She'll wait till I am dead—and then she's free.
As death solves all accounts.
*Iden.* Why give her pain;
And bootlessly?
*Meeta.* My father is in prison,
And he is doom'd to die within three days,
And I his child, with the faculty of speech,
Cannot acquitted stand to hold my tongue,
But, could I find for it no audience else,
Must make it ring to stones for mercy in him
While yet he breathes! how then should I be dumb
To human hearts, that are not hard as stones—
At least should not be so.

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*Iden.* Leave me to plead
Thy cause to her. Instruct me what thou'dst have,
I'll urge it to her, and with reasons back
Which thou would'st never dream of,—be there but
A glimpse of hope, I'll see it and point out,
And make it clear to her, and if her heart
Misgives her I'll encourage her. I'm her friend—
Her husband.

*Meeta.* You are not my father's child!
You would give up, where I would still go on:
That which would make me plead the heartier,
Would silence you. O, sir, in such a case,
Would you petition for your father's life
At second-hand? But help me! O do that!
And I will pay you with a life of thanks!
And pardon me that I reject your counsel,—
I cannot take it, sir!—Indeed I cannot!
My heart, and mind, and sense, are capable
Of nothing but one thing—to try all means,
However light or weighty, feasible
Or unfeasible, rational, or wild, or mad,
Allow'd or disallow'd—short of a stain
Would spot my soul—to save my father's life.

*Gen. Kle.* 'Sdeath, am I chain'd here, that I would be hence,
Yet lack the power to go!

*Iden.* The lady comes.
So—speak to her, since you will have it so.

*Enter* ADOLPHA *and* Servant, *who goes out.*

This is the daughter of the prisoner.

*Meeta.* [*running up to* ADOLPHA, *and kneeling.*] Bless thee!

*Adol.* Poor girl!—No! not thy knees!—thy arms! Here are mine.

*Meeta.* O no! my knee! my knee!—Or would you lift
My body up, lift first my heart, that's low
As misery can lay it! I have a father,
And he's in prison, and I must not see him.
I am his only child, and I have travell'd

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Hundreds of miles, and when I reach the gate,
'Tis shut on me, and human beings keep it!
He dies on Saturday, and they can tell me
I shall not see his living face again,
And nothing has he done why they should kill him!
Nothing! no more than you have! An old man
With a pale brow, sweet face, and silver hair,
That would not hurt a fly!—and he must perish,
And no one to console him, and his daughter
Within the wall's breadth of him;—She must not touch him,
See him, or speak to him!—You are a child!
You have a father! think of me and mine!
Speak for me! Will you? Pray the Governor
To bid him let me in and see him! Won't you?
Are you going? Will you speak for me? Will you get them
To let me see my father! Do—or here
I'll lie at your feet for ever!— [*Falls prostrate.*

*Gen. Kle.* Idenstein,
Can't you stop crying?

*Iden.* Sir, can you?

*Adol.* [*Going to* GENERAL KLEINER.] My father!

*Gen. Kle.* I'll not be shaken.

[*Crossing her—she holds him on the other side, kneeling to him.*]

*Meeta.* [*Partly raising herself and missing* ADOLPHA.] Has she gone to do it,
Or means she to escape me?—Ha! she's there
Kneeling to some one!—'Tis the Governor!
Mercy—O—mercy!

*Gen. Kle.* They are taking me
By storm. The citadel is theirs. I see
No use in holding out!—Eh! Idenstein?
Must I surrender? She shall see her father!

[MEETA *falls swooning at his feet—Picture—Scene drops.*

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## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*The Outskirts of* GENERAL TORSTENSON'S *Camp.*

*Enter* RODOLPH, GEROLD, LODOWICK, *and others.—Soldiers dragging in* JOSEPH.

*Ger.* He is a spy!
*Lod.* Drag him along to the guard.
Let him be tried at once and executed.
*Ger.* Nay kill him without trial. He 's a Jew
Blasphemer, reprobate, extortioner!
*Jos.* Nay, Sirs; but hear me!
*Rod.* Hear him.—Let him speak.
Give him fair play.
*Ger.* Fair play, and to a Jew!
*Jos.* You give a thief fair play—a murderer—
And why not me, who neither kill nor steal?
*Ger.* Not steal!
*Rod.* Have patience!
*Jos.* Have I stolen from you?
What have you lost to lay to my account?
Is it your charity—I have it not;
But I will spare you some of mine! Perhaps
The stock to serve a Christian may be small,
Yet such as 'tis, it would not let me use
A Christian, tho' a thief or murderer,
As you use me!
*Ger.* You hear him! Leave him, Sirs,
To me. I'll do his business!
*Jos.* A brave man!
*Ger.* Leave him to me, Sirs; I account a Jew
But as I would a rat!
*Jos.* Obey him, Sirs.
Let go your hold of me, and loose the rat,
Before that dog! I have seen a cur to turn
Before as small a thing! I mean it, Sirs.
But as you leave a rat to use his teeth,
Nor arm the dog you set upon a rat,

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So that, whate'er the odds, 'tis bite 'gainst bite,—
Give me equality of weapons too,
Hand against hand, at large, and arm'd or not,
And see, if, be the Jew indeed a rat.
The Christian nearer doth approach the man!
*Rod.* The Jew has fairly said.
*Jos.* Will fairly do,
Give him fair play! Sirs, you are Christian men!
A Christian father lies in jeopardy
In Prague—a reverend teacher of your faith.
Man hath summ'd up his days; the number's out
On Saturday, unless Heaven sends him aid;
He has an only daughter, who essays
To succour him, and spies salvation here,
But cannot come to bring 't—a Christian too—
So she must send for 't; and thereto employs
A friend, whose counsel, coffers, roof, hands, blood,
She has, and welcome too, at her command.
And Christian men—You, Sirs!—won't suffer him
To do her will, because he is a Jew!
*Ger.* We knew not this!
*Jos.* You would not know it, Sirs!
You would not hear me! would not let me speak!
Laid you not hands upon me one and all?
Vied you not in reviling me? with death
Did you not threaten me, nor till now give time,
To put a word of deprecation in,
Because I am a Jew!
*Lod.* We have wrong'd the Jew.
*Ger.* I fear we have.
*Rod.* Nay, Sirs, I know we have,
So let 's ask pardon of the honest man.
*Jos.* Ask me no pardon—it is given ere ask'd.
A venial fault 's atoned for, when 'tis own'd.
And pray you, Sirs, if you have friends yourselves—
As friends, however fenced in this world, lie
Within the leap of danger—bring me straight,
To one call'd Roselheim, who beareth rank
Among your forces.
*Rod.* Here the very man
Comes, as he knew your need. You 'll not complain?

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*Jos.* I never break my word, altho' a Jew.

[RODOLPH *and the rest go out.*

*Enter* RUPERT, MADAME ROSELHEIM, *and* ESTHER.

Do I not speak to Major Roselheim?

*Rup.* You have named me, friend!

*Jos.* Thanks, Sir, to call me so!

*Rup.* You have an errand for me—have you not?

*Jos.* Yes; but a messenger more welcome far
Than I, this letter, Sir, will tell it you—
I say more welcome—though it brings bad news.

*Mad. Ros.* From Meeta, is it not?

*Rup.* Yes, mother.

*Mad. Ros.* What
Says Meeta?

*Rup.* Presently!—I'll tell you all
Anon!

*Mad. Ros.* I read the letter in your face;
The old man's doom is seal'd,—not quite, but yet
Almost as sure?

*Rup.* You have guess'd it, mother.

*Mad. Ros.* Rupert,
Is there no chance for him?

*Rup.* There is a chance.

*Mad. Ros.* What is't, my son?

*Rup.* I may not tell you, madam.

*Mad. Ros.* Were it a breach of confidence?

*Rup.* No, mother,—
Of duty only. Movements, which are language
To a soldier, give me hopes, and these I am free
To share with you, and do so—not their cause.

*Mad. Ros.* Tell me his plight in every circumstance.

*Rup.* Learn it in one, he dies within two days,
Unless—

*Mad. Ros.* What, Rupert?

*Rup.* Learn the rest from hope!
Mother, you said the Governor of Prague
Was schoolfellow and choice comrade of my father,
From boyhood even to majority,—
That golden age of life, when hearts that join
Are riveted by metal weatherproof,

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That shines and keeps, while those it holds decay.
You would have sent to him; nay, gone yourself;
But, save in extreme need, I would not have it.
Send now—indite a letter—state your claim,
And crave delay to the last fraction
Of time that duty will allow—and let
Our Esther be the bearer, under guidance
Of this good man. Come there no other profit
'Twill place her nearer Meeta—should she need her.
She ne'er divines my care had conn'd this news [*Aside.*
Before this herald brought it.

*Mad. Ros.* Esther!

*Esther.* Madam?

*Mad. Ros.* Fear you to go to Prague?

*Esther.* To no place, madam,
For you.

*Mad. Ros.* 'Tis with a letter to the Governor.

*Esther.* I'll take it, madam: I'll do any thing
To leave the camp.

*Mad. Ros.* Why, what's the matter, Esther?

*Esther.* That boy—that Hans, is going fast to ruin.
Before they stop, they 'll make a soldier of him.
Already has he got their swagger, madam;
Drinks, swears,—yes, madam, on my life he does!
I 'll never take the poor lad home again
The simple thing he was.

*Mad. Ros.* Then, Esther, take
The boy along with you.

*Esther.* I thank you, madam:
Not that I care for Hans; but innocence
Is a rare thing, and should not be corrupted,
While those who know its value can prevent it.
So as you think it right that the poor lad
Be placed in safety while it can avail him,
I 'll take him with me, madam.

*Mad. Ros.* Do so, Esther;
Go, find him straight, then come at once to me.
[*Goes out.*

*Rup.* I have a charge for thee, concerning Meeta;
But this at once—should any one you love
Remain in Prague on Friday night, take care
They keep the house. You understand me, Esther?

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*Esther.* Humph! Yes, I think I do! But where is Hans?
Upon my life, I quite forget myself
With care for him. It fits not he and I
Should go together, and be nothing more
Than Hans and Esther! I have quite forgot
Appearances. And what will people say?
Here's a dilemma! If I leave the lad
Behind me, he is ruin'd. They'll be putting,
'Mongst other things, sweethearts into his head.
And I am ruin'd if I take him with me,
And he no right to me, nor I to him!
I could not pass him for my brother—none
Would credit that the selfsame mother bore us!
'Tis out of nature he could be my son.
What shall I do for sake of the poor lad?
There's no contrivance I can hit upon,
But to make Hans my husband. Well-a-day!
To think that ever it should come to this;
But, if it can't be help'd, as well be done
To-day as this day year. 'Tis very plain
I must be sacrificed, or Hans be lost,—
And that were cruelty—that must not be!
So, I've made up my mind! I'll marry him!

---

## SCENE II.—*Another part of the Camp.*

*Enter* HANS *and* RODOLPH.

*Hans.* And you have been in battle?
*Rod.* Yes.
*Hans.* How often?
*Rod.* A dozen times.
*Hans.* And never got a wound?
*Rod.* Only a scratch.
*Hans.* I would not mind a scratch,—
I would not mind a dozen scratches! If
It went no further, bayonets and swords
To me were things I'd take no more account of
Than pins and needles. But where was the scratch?
*Rod.* In the left side—a bayonet grazed me there.



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*Hans.* Odds, that was near! wasn't it? very near!
I should not mind one in the foot or leg,
The hand or arm—but when you come to that,
Fighting is very dangerous! I don't think
That I should like to be a soldier.
*Rod.* Yet
You are the very cut of one.
*Hans.* The cut?
Am I tho'?
*Rod.* One could see it with half an eye.
*Hans.* It must be very plain.
*Rod.* You were intended
By nature for a soldier.
*Hans.* Isn't it strange
That nature never told me so?
*Rod.* She left you
To find it out yourself. It is so plain.
*Hans.* And I to live to five-and-twenty years
And not to see it—No!—nor any one
To tell me on't till you did!
*Rod.* Friends are few,
One may go far ere find one.
*Hans.* Tell me what
You mean by the cut of a soldier, that hereafter
I know myself.
*Rod.* A sharp eye—a smart nose.
*Hans.* Have I such eye and nose?
*Rod.* You have.
*Hans.* Indeed?
I never dreamt on't! I have a smart nose
And a sharp eye? Now would I give a crown
That this were told to Esther! So! Go on.
*Rod.* You have a pair of shoulders.
*Hans.* La! you jest!
Speak you the truth now? mean you what you say?
Have I indeed a pair of shoulders?
*Rod.* Yes.
*Hans.* 'Tis plain I never knew myself before!
A sharp eye, a smart nose, and pair of shoulders!
I wonder what would Esther say to this!
Anything more?

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*Rod.* Ay marry! many a thing.
A chest that's high and full—a front-rank chest.
*Hans.* Never mind that—I like the rear-rank better
Were I a soldier I would always fight
In the rear-rank—I could do wonders there—
Incredible and never-heard-of things!—
What call you those who fight upon their knees
And stomachs, or ensconce themselves behind
Hedges and trees, and when the enemy
Advances, make a run of it, and leave
The rest to fight the battle out?
*Rod.* We call them
Sharp-shooters.
*Hans.* That's the very name! I'll be
A sharp-shooter. A sharpshooter had need
Have a sharp eye, and I have one, you know:
Haven't I? I'm contented with a chest
That's high and full, but not a front-rank one:
And so a sharp-shooter if anything!
We've settled that—Go on—Were Esther here!
She little dreams that I am such a man!
*Rod.* Your limbs are set right under you.
*Hans.* They are? You do not say so?
And have I got straight legs with all the rest?
Odds what a man I am! I think I'll be
A soldier.
*Rod.* You'd be sure of it, but once
You saw yourself dress'd in your uniform.
*Hans.* 'Twould make a little change.
*Rod.* A little, say you!
'Twould make a hero of you.
*Hans.* I should like
To see myself a hero! What was that? [*A shot without.*
*Rod.* Only a shot.
*Hans.* O, was it nothing more?
A shot! I thought 'twas something else! who minds
A shot?
*Rod.* 'Tis clear you do not.
*Hans.* No—not I!
I fired a shot once when I was a boy,
And kill'd a sparrow—as I live I did!



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I to be startled by a shot! [*shot again*] Odds life!
That's shameful waste of powder, and in time
Of war too.
*Rod.* Here! put on this cap of mine,
And show me how you look in it.
*Hans.* I please you?
*Rod.* Gods, Sir, you make a show more warlike far
Than would a whole platoon with shoulder'd arms
And bayonets fix'd.
*Hans.* What were it did you add
My body to my head!
*Rod.* To go by rule
You would be worth a regiment! How fine
Your eye looks when it rolls! Here, take my sword
And flourish it.
*Hans.* What think'st me match to now?
*Rod.* A whole brigade—Foot—Horse—Artillery,
To sweep a field!
*Hans.* I'll be a soldier.

ESTHER—*entering and aside.*

*Esther.* Hans!
*Rod.* Then take the bounty.
*Esther.* Take it if he dares!
*Hans.* I never said I'd take it.
*Rod.* But you said
You'd be a soldier.
*Hans.* Yes; with Esther's leave.
*Esther.* O! was it so?—What do you with that cap?
Take't off, or I will put one on your head
Will fit it better! Flourishing a sword!
Have you a mind the boy should cut himself,
You man of war?—Give back the sword and cap.
Sir, you may sell your own limbs if you like,
You know the worth of them; but for the lad's,
They're not his own; and not for market, Sir.
*Rod.* And is the bargain off?
*Hans.* And don't you hear
What Esther says?—It were a valiant man
Would gainsay her!—I would not for my head!
*Rod.* [*looking alternately at* ESTHER *and* HANS].
I see!

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*Hans.* We'll talk of it another time
When she's not by.
*Rod.* [*to* ESTHER]. Well; I'll let off the lad
So that I get a kiss?
*Hans* [*placing himself between them*]. You get not that!
Nay, an I die for it, you get not that!
Nay, an you come with swords and bayonets,
Bullets and cannon-balls, you get not that!
*Esther.* Hans is a man!—Take my advice, and know
[*to* RODOLPH]
A lion without proving of his fangs.
Touch me! and better for you you had been
In prison keeping than at large to-day.
Man never kiss'd me yet, Sir—
*Hans.* Only Hans.
*Esther.* Nor e'er shall kiss me, Sir!
*Hans.* Save I'm the man.
*Esther.* I like a smirking swaggering turkey-cock,
That eyes a woman as he need but look
And swallow her!
*Rod.* I'll see your spark again. [*Goes out.*
*Esther.* See he don't prove a fire and scorch you, Sir!
Hans, you have acted like a man to-day,
You're a good lad; but you were never made
Match for a world like this, to get thro' it
By yourself.—A pity 'tis you have not aunt,
Sister nor mother, that would look to you,
Nor honest woman that might serve for such,
And, maybe, love you better!
*Hans.* Esther!—Esther!—
*Esther.* Why, bless me, Hans! you're always saying that,
'Tis very plain there's something you would have,
But what that something is, not quite so clear;
Speak out, Hans, and take heart—I cannot read
The stars, you know; I'm not a conjuror,
Or a diviner, or a doctor, who
Finds hidden ailments out. I'm nothing but
An honest simple woman, that would do
A kind turn for thee, knew she but the way;
So want'st thou anything, speak out, good Hans.

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*Hans.* I want a wife.
*Esther.* You do not say so!
*Hans.* Yes,
I do.—Now, wanted you a husband, Esther,
How well we should be match'd!
*Esther.* I want a husband!—
But you do want a wife—that makes a change:
And though I do not want a husband, Hans,
Yet I might bring myself, you know, to take one,
To save the wits or life of a poor lad
Like you, that has no mother, sister, aunt,
To look to him! Know you where bides the Chaplain
O' the regiment?
*Hans.* I do.
*Esther.* I'll talk with him.
Do you not lead the way?
What, are you not in haste to get a wife?
I thought you were.
*Hans.* I am; but am so pleased,
I know not what to do!—to go or stay,
To laugh or cry, to talk or hold my tongue.
*Esther.* Poor, honest lad! A pity 'twere the world
Should take thee in! Thou ought'st to have a wife,
If but to look to thee! 'Twould not be right
To leave thee without one, a day, an hour;
And such a friend as I 'm to thee, at hand.
Would it, Hans? The poor lad! he 's quite confounded!
How interesting does he look!—Come, Hans!
You know the way to the Chaplain's—I believe—
I think—I 'm almost sure I 'll take you, Hans!
[*They go out,* ESTHER *leaning upon him.*

SCENE III.—*The Fortress of Prague—A Room.*

*Gen. Kleiner* [*without*]. Wait you without.
*Adol.* [*without*]. We will, Sir.
*Gen. Kle.* [*without*]. Idenstein,
Keep guard upon her.
*Iden.* [*without*]. There 's no need, Sir.

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*Gen. Kle.* No—
A wife most docile—let her have her way!
[*Enters with the* LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.
Bring here the prisoner. Do not say 'tis I
That want to see him, nor apprise him how
I am accompanied—[LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR *goes out.*
I had hoped this task
Would have been wholly spared me,—so relapse
Of consciousness did follow on relapse
When nature once gave way, till nearly half
The interval that spares him life was out.
But she recovers, and at once demands
Fulfilment of my word.—What now my course?
A veteran take the field without a plan—
Or take the field at all with mutiny
In the ranks! How come I here? What brought me here?
A regiment of foot, or horse, or what?
Can I believe I came of mine own will?
With aid of mine own limbs, when I would be
A thousand miles away? I must be mad,—
I, that can't bear to see a caged bird!
Mad for a hundred ducats! I would give
That sum—ay, twice as much, to any one
Would bind me hand and foot and take me hence!
[*Re-enter* LIEUTENANT *with* MUHLDENAU.
*Lieut.* The prisoner.
*Gen. Kle.* Leave us, good Lieutenant. [LIEUTENANT *goes out*]. Sir—
*Muhl.* Your pleasure?
*Gen. Kle.* Pleasure, Sir? I have no pleasure!
I 'm an unhappy man, that with the power
To do his pleasure cannot do it, Sir.
I know the track I ought to take, and would,
Yet always go the way that 's contrary.
Sir, were a fever next door to me, and
I knew removing further would prevent me
From taking it, I would remove next door!
There is in some men a fatality
That knowledge is more loss than profit to them,
For what doth seem their bane as clear as day

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Is ever sure to be the thing they do,—
As sight of a descending shell, 'tis known,
Will fix the man who sees it to the spot,
Where he is sure to die, with limbs at large
As his that walks or runs.
*Muhl.* I know you, Sir!
The gracious man they took me first before,
Who pitied me; with patient audience heard me;
Enjoin'd them gently to entreat me, and,
Far as their duty warranted, to make
The pains of bondage light.
*Gen. Kle.* Have they obey'd me?
*Muhl.* They have.
*Gen. Kle.* You want no comforts they can give you?
*Muhl.* They have done all they could to comfort me,
And Heaven has done the rest. I am to die
On Saturday—I ask'd not at what hour?
Will 't please you tell me, Sir?
*Gen. Kle.* Sir?
*Muhl.* I perceive
It gives you pain to do 't. Don't heed for me—
He feels not death that uses life to die!
The hour, Sir?
*Gen. Kle.* Nine o'clock.
*Muhl.* What kind of death
Am I to suffer?
*Gen. Kle.* Sir?
*Muhl.* I merely ask,
Because there 's something in the form of death
To poor humanity, however brave
To meet it. I would know it ere it comes,—
Look at it—meet it with accustom'd eye,—
Not to be startled by it at the time.
I should be all myself—not that I trust
In my own strength—I have a firmer stay.
What death am I to die?—Is't by the sword?
*Gen. Kle.* It is!
*Muhl.* I 'm sorry, sir, to give you pain.
*Gen. Kle.* Sir, I can fight!—I love to fight. I think
The blast of a trumpet music!—Beat a drum
In concert with the shrill throat of fife,

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And my head dances!—It is mirth to me
To hear the running roar of musquetry
From wing to wing, along the blazing line!
And when the cannon thunders clap on clap,
So thick there 's not a breath of pause between,
I tower as I myself did hurl the bolts!
I have seen death on every side of me,
And given it not a thought! I have ta'en wounds,
And never felt them in the battle's heat!
But I can't bear to look upon a man
About to die, and in cold blood! I own
I am a coward there. Forgive me, sir!
Have you a friend, sir, whom you wish to see?

*Muhl.* Is there one near me? You're a merciful
Considerate man—you 'd know when you would raise
A hope—you would not raise one but to kill it!
Sir, I had learn'd to think a boundary,
'Twixt me and all things living 'neath the sun,
Was drawn, and no more to be cross'd by me
Than the dark frontier of the grave once pass'd!
But you have breathed a word, and it is gone!
I have a child, Sir!—If she knows my plight,
She 's here in Prague—she 's at my prison door!
Is she?—Is it of her you speak?—That sob—
In the next room! Is it my daughter's heart
That's bursting there?—Is it?—My Meeta!—Come!—
Thou know'st thy father!—Fear not for him—come!
He has strength enough to bear the sight of thee;
But not to want it longer, when he thinks
Thou 'rt near him! Come to him! Come—come! my child!

[MEETA *enters, rushing into her father's arms;* ADOLPHA *and* IDENSTEIN *following.*

*Meeta.* You bear it, father!—See!—and so do I!
O, I was right!—No door that man can shut,
But Heaven can open! Day did follow day!
Chance pass'd away, and chance! Yet, spite of all,
I look'd at hope, and would not see it dwindled;
And 'tis fulfill'd! I have pass'd your prison door!—
I see you!—hear you!—I am in your arms!

[MUHLDENAU *and* MEETA *retire.*



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*Gen. Kle.* Where can Adolpha be, and Idenstein?
What can they be about? What do they mean
By staying here? Why don't they call me hence?
How cool they stand!—how very cool!—while I
Am writhing!—Ay!—A pair of callous hearts!
They would be thought to weep—and if they do,
They like it! Cough, and seem to wipe your eyes!
Do! Can't you go, if you can't bear it? Don't
You know there is a door? and can't you go,
And take me with you?—Idenstein!—Adolpha!

*Adol.* Sir!

*Gen. Kle.* Madam!

*Iden.* General!

*Gen. Kle.* Sir!—I hope you 're pleased?

*Adol.* At what, dear sir?

*Gen. Kle.* To see two human hearts
Bleeding, that you stay there as you were wood,
Or lead, or stone, instead of flesh and blood!

*Adol.* We thought your duty, sir——

*Gen. Kle.* My duty!—Pshaw!
You know you never let me do my duty!

*Adol.* We will withdraw, if you will let us, father!

*Gen. Kle.* "Let us!"—You never do but what you 're let!

[GENERAL KLEINER, IDENSTEIN, *and* ADOLPHA, *move softly towards the door.*

*Muhl.* Who is that?

*Meeta.* Which?

*Muhl.* She that 's moving towards the door!

*Meeta.* The lady that obtain'd admittance for me.

*Muhl.* Bid her stop!

*Meeta.* My father?

*Muhl.* Lady, stop! The face,
Well as the form!—I saw thy mother's form,
And now I see her face! Do you not see
Your mother?

*Meeta.* Father, you forget—she died
When I was but an infant!

*Muhl.* True!—you 're right!
I had forgot! Then see your mother now—
As she was at your age, Meeta!—Yes!—my child!

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*Meeta.* Sir! — father! — 'tis the daughter of the Governor!

*Iden.* His mind is shaken by imprisonment!

*Muhl.* No, Sir! my heart is struck! struck by the form
And face of one that's dead—long dead—yet stands
Alive again before me!

*Meeta.* Dearest father,
It is the daughter of the Governor,
The Governor that's there!

*Muhl.* I beg her pardon,
I beg her pardon, Meeta, yet I feel,
As I were asking pardon of my child.
Sir, were those eyes your wife's?—Those perfect arches,
As though art set a copy unto nature,
To try her cunning! and that domy forehead
Of feeling, speaking marble! and the rest
O' the features, with the form therewith consorting!
Were they your wife's?—If so, they once belong'd
To mine!—I cannot look on her and think
She's not my child. [*Turns up.*

*Iden.* Why are you lost, Adolpha? [*Aside.*

*Adol.* I cannot help it! I am strangely moved. [*Aside.*

*Iden.* At what, my love?

*Adol.* [*aloud*]. To hear a father's voice,
As it did never sound to me before!

*Muhl.* What said'st thou, Meeta?

*Meeta.* 'Twas the lady spoke.

*Muhl.* The voice too! It doth talk to me of home,
As from my hearth—my very hearth it came!
But she's the daughter of the Governor!
[*Retires to the back of the stage and sits.*

*Meeta.* As his heart drops the hope, mine takes it up!

*Gen. Kle.* Idenstein—

*Iden.* Sir—

*Gen. Kle.* Let us go.

*Iden.* Adolpha!

*Meeta.* Stop!
No!—Not a trait! No more resembles him
Than I!—while as I look at her, methinks,
Touches as of a face I can't recal,

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Yet feel as once I knew, start up to me.
You're troubled, Sir—nor yet are *you* at ease, [*to* IDENSTEIN]
So many tokens call him owner, yet
The precious thing that bears them not his own!
Incredible! impossible—my heart
Protests against it!—yearns for her! cries out
She's his and mine, and will not be gainsaid!
Are you the daughter of the Governor?
*Adol.* I am—I am his only child!—
*Meeta.* You are!
I kiss your hand and ask your pardon! but—
What scar is this upon your wrist?—No knife
Could make this wound, and in your father's house
How came you by it? Was it by a knife?
*Adol.* No, by a sword.
*Meeta.* When?
*Adol.* When I was an infant!
*Meeta.* Where?
*Adol.* At the siege of Magdeburg!
*Meeta.* Gracious Heaven!
How came you there?
*Adol.* I know not.
*Meeta* [*to General Kleiner*]. Sir, are you
Her father? Is he, Sir, her father?—[*to* IDENSTEIN]—
Both
Do look at one another! Providence!
What can this mean? Why are you silent, Sir?
If she you call your daughter—Look at me!
Don't turn away!—If she you call your child
Was in the siege of Magdeburg, I lost
A sister there.—Is this she? O, a word
To save a bursting heart! Her nurse, whose hand
I held by, carried her,—a soldier seized
The woman by the hair—
*Gen. Kle.* I smote him down,
And saved the child.
*Meeta.* 'Tis she! She's ours! She's found! My sister!
*Muhl.* Meeta
Thy sister! What! in one another's arms!
Give her to me!

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*Meeta.* Here, take her to thy heart!
Into it, father! Sister! Father! Heaven!

[MUHLDENAU *and* ADOLPHA *embrace*—MEETA *rushes up to them, and kneeling, clasps them both.—Act ends.*]

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## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*A Room in Joseph's House.*

*Enter* MEETA *and* ADOLPHA.

*Adol.* What place is this, and wherefore am I here?
*Meeta.* Art thou afraid of me, my sister?
*Adol.* No.
*Meeta.* Then fear not where I bring thee, nor the cause.
O! my new other self, were it a time,
I'd give thee vouchers of heart-coined words
To prove thy safety—good of every kind—
Dear to me—worlds, ay, worlds beyond my own.
Dost trust in me?
*Adol.* I do.
*Meeta.* Wilt do my bidding—
Wilt do't to-night, however questionable,
Inexplicable, strange?
*Adol.* Your words are darkness,
Which yet I trust myself to, with your looks
Of Truth and Love for guides. I'll do your will.
*Meeta.* My sister, my dear sister, let me think,
And lay your cheek the while a space to mine;
There, there, thou prompt'st me sweetly with the touch
Of thy sweet cheek. I have comfort for thee, sister—
Our father will not die.
*Adol.* How know you that?
The Governor has heard no tidings yet—
The distance greater, than his courier,
Despatch'd on the instant, with the prayer for mercy,
Could compass in a day!

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*Meeta.* He will not die.
*Adol.* My sister!
*Meeta.* What?
*Adol.* Your words are oracles
I trust to, with a thousand human fears
To shake my heart.
*Meeta.* Our father will not die!
Now listen; there will be a storm to-night—
Fierce rain with deluge, high uprooting wind,
Thunder and thunder-bolts. Look in mine eyes,
And let them serve thee for interpreters,
To make my dark words clear. 'Twill break around
Our father's prison; there its rage will play,
Nor, till it bursts an entrance open to him,
To set him free, stop smiting! Canst thou read,
Without a glossary? This house will be
Beyond its range!
*Adol.* My husband, and my father!
I cannot help it, he has been my father
In all things but my blood.
*Meeta.* There's nothing wrong.
'Tis very right. I'll call him father too;
So think him, feel him too, for thy dear sake.
And now thy promise, sister! Weigh my words.
Thy husband and the Governor may fall;
Here they are safe.—Don't interrupt me, sister,
Time 's brief and swift, and action must be instant,
Or not at all.—Thou must indite a letter,
Urging their prompt attendance here—alone—
On matter of as pressing moment as
Question of life or death. I know the thought
Thou wouldst give utterance to—'tis not an act
Of treachery, but duty. Thou didst promise
Obedience to me.
*Adol.* Hardly dost thou task me.
But I 'll respect my word.
*Meeta.* Then prove it straight,
Sit down and write the letter. O, my sister,
Confide in me! do it without stint! with cheer!—
That 's right!—you will!—go on!

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ADOLPHA *writes.—Enter* JOSEPH.

*Jos.* The trusty friends
I told you of are come.
*Meeta.* I thank you. Armed ?
*Jos.* A weapon each beneath his gaberdine.
*Meeta.* How many are they ?
*Jos.* Twenty.
*Meeta.* That is right;
Their number makes resistance idle. Yet
As courage does not take account of odds,
And slightest scath to them were wound to us,
'Twere well they should disarm your visitors
On the unprepared instant. Is it not strange
I grow more calm as the dread crisis comes
Of this momentous night ? You are aware
Whatever befals, the motive of the act
Holds you absolved:—besides, it is not yours,
But mine !
*Jos.* I take it all on mine own head.
*Meeta.* There mustn't be a light when they come in,
Lest it betray thy friends !—
Go send me now
That servant of the Governor who came
Along with us. Is 't written, sister ?
*Adol.* Yes.
*Meeta.* Thank you, my sister; now direct it.

*Enter* Governor's Servant.

Sir, seek straight the Governor, and give him this.
[Servant *goes out.*
Now, sister, come, and be thou strong of heart:
I 'll give thee clearer reasons on the way.
This night of death shall bring a day of life.
[*They go out.*

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## SCENE II.—*Another Room in* JOSEPH'S *House.*

*Enter* HANS.

*Hans.* I wonder when the honeymoon begins !
I 'm one day married, and no glimpse on 't yet !
Or shall I ever have a honeymoon,

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Or is there such a thing? Until I see it,
I 'll not believe it. Twenty leagues of travel
Is not a honeymoon! Strange company,
That care no doits for me, nor I for them,
Are not a honeymoon! A dinner snapp'd,
Not eaten, can't be call'd a honeymoon!
'Tis Esther's fault! No sooner were we married,
Than off she sets for Prague—nor leaves me choice.
Except to stay behind, or come with her.
Of course I do the latter, as beseems
A married man. I know my duty, but
I see no honeymoon, or chance of it!
No merry-making!—not a soul I know
To give me joy! No presents, visitings,
Feastings, and dancing, as I know are wont
At other people's marriages, with scores
Of little tricks and rogueries they play.
I have not had a laugh—and here I 'm left,
Five hours alone! Is this a honeymoon!
And if it is, I would I ne'er had been
A married man! I'm fit to hang myself.

*Esther* [*entering*]. Husband!

*Hans.* Well, wife?

*Esther.* You look not happy!

*Hans.* No.

*Esther.* And why, dear chuck?

*Hans.* Because I am not so.

*Esther.* Not happy!

*Hans.* No.

*Esther.* Why, am not I thy wife?
Treat I not thee kindly and lovingly?
Do I not call thee nubby, spouse, and chuck,
And every other kind of tender names?
What want'st thou to content thee, dearest love?

*Hans.* I want a honeymoon.

*Esther.* A honeymoon?
Why this is it! 'Tis on, my honey-love,
And almost all to come.

*Hans.* 'Tis on? 'Tis not!
Be this the honeymoon, I'm sick of it!
I want no more of it! Will have no more.

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*Esther.* O cruel—cruel Hans.
*Hans.* If I had thought
To pass such honeymoon as this, I ne'er
Had married.
*Esther.* Would you have me break my heart?
*Hans.* I have no comfort with thee.
*Esther.* Do I live
To hear thee say so!
*Hans.* No delight in thee.
*Esther.* No, Hans? You'll make me wish that I were dead!
*Hans.* I took thee for a helpmate—thou art none!
I scarce set eyes upon thee! Thou art out,
Five hours and more, and hast not told me where.
*Esther.* I went on business, Hans, that's not my own.
*Hans.* Thou hast no business with such business! Fit
I mope at home, and have a wife that ought
To keep me company! I'm fairly turn'd
From honey into gall! What business was it,
Took thee away?
*Esther.* I may not tell.
*Hans.* You must!
*Esther.* I won't!
*Hans.* I'll show her, I'll be master! Now,
Or never—I'm resolved! One whisper'd me,
As from the Chaplain's we came out—"Beware!—
Look to your wife, Sir!"—'twas the corporal
Tried to beguile me—"mind! or she'll put on
What is no proper part of woman's gear!"
So I'll begin in time! What bus'ness was it
Took thee away?
*Esther* [*gently*]. I will not tell thee, Hans!
*Hans* [*angrily*]. You won't?
*Esther* [*more angrily*]. I won't, Hans!—Mind what you're about!
You know me!
*Hans* [*angrily*]. Yes!—but yet you know not me!—
I will not have it!—won't allow it!
*Esther.* What?
*Hans.* To have thee gadding in the honeymoon—
If honeymoon it be!

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*Esther.* If honeymoon
It be?
*Hans.* I say it is no honeymoon!—
Where is the wine?—where are the cakes?—where are
The sports and games?—where are the friends and neighbours?
Why are we here, and not in Mariendorpt?
I thought we should go thither, when I made
A wife of thee!
*Esther.* You made a wife of me?
You say it, Sir?—'Twas I made you a husband!
*Hans.* And if you did, I'll keep myself a husband—
I will be master!
*Esther.* Hear him!
*Hans.* Lord!
*Esther.* O dear!
*Hans.* And lord of that, I'll not be left alone
Again!—I won't!—to fret myself from wine
To vinegar!
*Esther.* Look, sir!
*Hans.* Look, ma'am!
*Esther.* I tell you——
*Hans.* And I tell you!
*Esther.* I'll make you know yourself!
*Hans.* You will?—I'll run away to Mariendorpt!
*Esther* [*frightened.*] You won't, dear Hans?
*Hans.* I'll be divorced—I will!
*Esther.* You'll kill me, Hans!
*Hans.* I'll take another wife!
*Esther* [*crying*]. O dear! O dear!
Was it for this, I let you win my heart—
O'ercome my hatred of your tyrant sex—
And from my state of happy singlehood,
Transform me to a miserable wife?—
O Esther! Esther!—woman never knows
When she's well off, until she is undone!
*Hans.* Don't cry! 'Twill spoil your eyes! My wrath is soothed,
I'm your own Hans again—your loving Hans!
I'm pacified—I'm calm'd. The storm's blown o'er;
All's smooth and still, no ripple now, nor breath.

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*Esther.* I'll tell thee all, Hans.
*Hans.* No, you shan't!—I say
I will not hear a word—a syllable,
As I'm your husband.—Let her have her way,
So that she keeps to wearing her own clothes!
*Esther.* I thank you, Hans. I see you love me still.
*Hans.* Love you?—Adore you!—Idolize you!—But
'Twill never do to want our honeymoon! [*They retire.*

(*Enter abruptly* GENERAL KLEINER *and* IDENSTEIN, *followed by* JOSEPH.)

*Gen. Kle.* What means this violence?—What men were those
Disarm'd us in the hall? The lady where,
That sent for us?
*Jos.* No ill is meant you, Sir,
But good. The men disarm'd you, are your guards,
Trusty for you to death. The lady 's gone.
*Gen. Kle.* 'Tis all thy wife's contriving, Idenstein.
*Iden.* You know the value of a thousand ducats?
*Jos.* I do.
*Iden.* I'll give you them to set us free.
*Jos.* Took I the sum, 'twould be to peril that
Were worth it to you countless times—your lives!
*Iden.* Our lives!
*Jos.* They are in my care.
*Gen. Kle.* Look, honest friend;
Wilt thou consent to set us free at once,
There's not a unit in two thousand ducats,
But I will count thee down.
*Iden.* Thou art a Jew,
And wilt not list to reason?
*Jos.* Not such reason
As that. There's not in Prague that bulky sum
Could weigh—the matter of a line—the scale
Wherein my pledge to keep you here is put—
My love—my gratitude—my principle—
Which I respect, my Lord, altho' a Jew!
*Gen. Kle.* Dost thou reflect that I'm the Governor?
That I can punish thee? That I can throw thee
Into a dungeon?—put thee to the rack?

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Load thee with chains, consign thee to the galleys?—
Hang thee, good Jew?
*Jos.* I know it very well.
I know thou hast the power, altho' thou lack'st
The will, to execute a cruel deed;
And when befits the penalty to fall,
Dost use the keen sword with a melting eye.
Every one knows the Governor of Prague.
*Gen. Kle.* Every one knows him for the fool he is!
*Jos.* Altho' a Jew, Sir, I do honour you.
The hospitality I force upon you—
Except compulsion—I have taken care
Should stand acquitted of all disrespect.
That room presents refreshment—that beyond
Repose. One night alone you are my guest,
And shall to-morrow fully learn the cause
Why you are here, and then be free to go.
So pray you find contentment, if you can,
Where profit cannot come of discontent. [*Goes out.*

(*As* ESTHER *and* HANS *are following,* IDENSTEIN *beckons the former.*)

*Iden.* Hark you, fair lady, you are beautiful.
*Esther.* I know I am.
*Hans.* She knows she is.
*Iden.* She is;
And beauty argues goodness—and if goodness
Be not made up, 'mongst other precious things,
Of generosity, 'tis negative,
And proves of no account!
*Hans.* What's negative?
*Iden.* A diamond necklace clasp'd around your neck.
A score of ducats to such several drop,
And each the twentieth fraction of the set,
Would not be out of place.—Is there a window
Whence one might drop himself into the street?
*Hans.* No, there is not! You put no necklace, Sir,
About her neck! 'Tis mine, and not her own!
Go, Esther!
*Esther.* Sir, I am not to be bribed.
*Hans.* That's right—but go! [ESTHER *goes out.*

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*Iden.* You are her husband, friend?
*Hans.* I am.
*Iden.* And well she chose you.
*Hans.* So she did.
*Iden.* Art thou in service?
*Hans.* Yes.
*Iden.* Wouldst thou not rather
Be thy own master?
*Hans.* Who would not?
*Iden.* Wouldst like
To be a hero?
*Esther* [*without*]. Hans!
*Hans.* I'm coming!—Yes, [*to* IDENSTEIN].
Knew I a way was safe.
*Iden.* You have a scruple
To be a soldier?
*Hans.* A small scruple.
*Esther* [*without*]. Hans!
*Hans.* I'm coming.
*Iden.* Would you like to have a farm?
Have your own serving-men and serving-maids?
Keep your own swine and kine? Ride your own horse?—
You'd look a man on horseback!
*Hans.* So I would!
*Iden.* All these are thine, wilt go an errand first.
*Hans.* Where?
*Esther* [*without*]. Hans!
*Hans.* I'm coming, Esther.
*Esther.* Come along!
*Hans.* Where?
*Esther* [*appearing at the door*]. Hans!
*Hans.* I'm coming, Esther.
*Esther.* Come at once! [*Pulls him off.*
*Iden.* We are a pair of birds, Sir, in a cage.
*Gen. Kle.* Birds?—We are fools! This comes of my good-nature!
It still has been my ruin! I was made
A dunce by my mother, for my fondness of her!
What was lack'd in spoiling me, aunts then made up—
I was so docile, bidable to them!
My sisters brought me to destruction by

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Improving my good temper, which they made
Their ready scape-goat in all kinds of scrapes ;
And which their gentle friends in dimity
Did use, to get me into divers straits,
From which to extricate myself were only
Entanglement anew ! My wife did crown
My ruin ! My sweet disposition made her
So fond of me, to please her I would feign
Sickness, that she might play my nurse. One thing
Alone was wanting to my quite undoing—
A child, and that, as nature would not find me,
I must provide myself with—thy Adolpha—
Who for her own ends keeps us prisoners here !
What's to be done ?

*Iden.* To bear what must be borne.
They that command us are a host to one.

*Gen. Kle.* Let's in, then, and submit.

*Iden.* I follow, Sir.

*Gen. Kle.* What I was ever, a good-natured man !
[*They go out.*

---

## SCENE THE LAST—*A Dungeon.*

MUHLDENAU *asleep on a couch*—MEETA *sitting near, with* ADOLPHA *kneeling by her, sleeping with her head on* MEETA'S *lap.*

*Enter* LIEUTENANT.

*Meeta.* Softly !—They sleep !—Your news is bad ?

*Lieut.* It is. The answer is arrived. With fruitless search
They have sought the Governor : not finding him,
On me, as second in command, devolved
The painful task to break the packet open,
Which gives no hope of life.

*Meeta.* It was expected :
We are prepared.—So, please you softly tread,
As you depart again.—[*Lieut. goes out.*] — He has awaked her !—
Sleep, sister, sleep !

*Adol.* [*starting*]. What time of night is it ?

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*Meeta.* It is no longer night, but morning sister.
*Adol.* Morning?
*Meeta.* The chimes of a new day have struck
Again and yet again!
*Adol.* How often, sister?
*Meeta.* Thrice.
*Adol.* It is very still.
*Meeta.* Too still, but we shall hear
The sound of stirring shortly.
*Adol.* You are sure?
*Meeta.* I am.
*Adol.* You comfort me!—you are so calm!
*Meeta.* Sister, we both had need be calm!—Look there!
*Adol.* How sound our father sleeps!—Knows he our hope?
*Meeta.* No!—it might draw his thoughts from better hope:
Hope that doth ever in possession end;
Hope that hath naught of earth in it, to crumble
I' the grasping. Sister, I know my father!—
On earth, he has lived in heaven;—Don't fear for him!
He is the happy man, that is prepared
To live or die!
*Adol.* He will not die!
*Meeta.* Speak softly!
He is awaked! It can't be help'd. Dear sister,
Let it not melt thee, should he talk of death.
For tears are catching things, and nature's nature,
Long as it breathes. Let's countenance the calm
Which his pure spirit keeps.
*Muhl.* Meeta.
*Meeta.* Here, father.
*Muhl.* What, both my children!—both!—Adolpha, too!
Is not this merciful, to have you here?
That my last earthward sigh I am permitted
To breathe upon your heads in blessing you?
What is the time, my Meeta?—How far on
Is my last day within this prison-house?
These walls of clay, in which the spirit's pent—
That's going back to Him who lodged it here!

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'Tis nothing else! How easy, then, to die,
To him who thinks it so! What is the time?
*Meeta.* Another day is onward.
*Muhl.* To that window
Comes the first beam that's herald of the sun—
See if there's sign of the fair messenger,
Or shall I do't, my child?
*Meeta.* No, father.
*Muhl.* Well,
How is it?—Is there mark on the horizon—
A blending as of light with darkness, or
Something that's plainer?—Tell me, child! Mine eye
Is fix'd on day, to which noonday is night!
*Meeta.* 'Tis early morning—a dun glow—almost
A streak.
*Muhl.* The boundary of yesterday
Is cross'd some hours. Come hither, both of you.
Kneel down! The longest time that man may live
The lapse of generations of his race,
The continent entire of time itself
Bears not proportion to eternity,
Huge as the fraction of a grain of dew
Comeasured with the broad unbounded ocean!
There is the time of man—his proper time:
Looking at which, this life is but a gust,
A puff of breath, that's scarcely felt ere gone!
Then comes a calm that lasts. My youngest one,
Least known, but not less loved—My Meeta—
*Meeta.* Father,
Am not I part of both?
*Muhl.* My noble child!
My Christian-trained child! I did thee wrong
To fear exception thou mightst take at that
Which made my children equal. My found one!
My blessings on thee full as upon her
Was never from my side. Join hands with her!
Love her for ever! as thyself. Two hearts
That join in truth, do make a wall of rock
'Gainst which the surges of the world may lash,
But only break themselves.
*Adol.* I hear a noise!
'Tis ——

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*Meeta.* Sister, peace. What heeds a noise?
*Muhl.* I think
I heard it too—and understand it; but
Whate'er it is, it matters not to me.
I see—the light comes on. Meeta, my child,
Thy father gives thee thanks for hours and hours
Of happiness. You have let fall her hand—
Take it again—never let go the love
That now doth join thy sister's hand to thine!
And take thy father's blessing, free and full,
Which Heaven attests that thou hast merited,
Who never wast but dutiful to me! [*Noises nearer.*
*Adol.* Hear you the sounds again, and louder?
*Meeta.* Peace!
Dear sister, if it is to come, it will.
[*Noises again, and nearer yet.*
*Muhl.* What, Meeta? These are not accustomed sounds.
There is a shining something in thine eye,
That looks like hope—and thine, my other child!
My children! is there hope? I'm human still!
I'll live for you, my children.—[*Noises again.*]—
Those are shouts.
They move not with such sounds who come to see
The spectacle of an untimely death—
For human nature, howsoever wild,
Is human still. [*Noise very loud, as of a general attack.*
*Meeta.* Yes, father, there is hope!

*Enter* LIEUTENANT.

What come you for?
*Lieut.* The prisoner.
*Meeta.* For what?
*Lieut.* To place him in securer keeping.
*Meeta.* Hence!
He's in his children's arms—or leave him here,
Or take us all together.
[*Shouts, and reports of musquetry and cannon.*]

Soldier *enters.*

You are call'd for [*To* LIEUTENANT.
To look to our defence! They come upon us
A thousand men to one—the castle 's lost!



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*Adol.* He's saved—
*Meeta.* Not yet!
[*Noise as of something giving way and falling.*
*Adol.* Hear you—They burst the gates!
*Meeta.* It may be something else.
*Muhl.* Ah, now to die— [*Noise as of people ascending.*]
Were pain!
*Adol.* The rush of steps!
*Rup.* [*without*]. Burst in the door.
*Meeta.* 'Tis Rupert's voice—My father's saved—He lives!
*Rup.* [*bursting in with others*]. My Meeta! honour'd father!—we have come
With life and liberty!
*Meeta.* We thank you, Rupert!
Rupert, I knew you would not let him die!
How far is Prague your own?
*Rup.* This quarter, Meeta,
Which yet commands the rest! This post was long
Our General's aim; yet so he doubtful kept
His eagle hovering the mighty pounce
Your strait accelerated, none could guess,
Until his fated quarry felt him down!
*Meeta.* Send trusty friends, and strong, along with me;
Speak not, but let thy answer be the act.
*Rup.* Dismiss your care! It is not needed, Meeta.
The faithful Hebrew met me in advancing,
And took in charge a chosen band to watch
Success, and bring thy friends to thee: by this
I doubt not they are here—

*Enter* JOSEPH, *conducting* GENERAL KLEINER *and* IDENSTEIN.

The Governor?
*Gen. Kle.* Yes, Sir,—but not your prisoners—that honour
These ladies claim.
*Adol.* Forgive us, father!
*Gen. Kle.* What!
Now thou hast found thy father?
*Adol.* Father still!

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*Muhl.* Give me the Hebrew's hand—the Christian's friend—
His elder brother, tho' with difference.
*Jos.* All men should thus be brothers.
*Hans.* We shall have
Our honeymoon at last.
*Esther.* Be silent, Hans.
*Meeta.* Let all be silent, save the grateful hearts,
That speak in humble confidence to you.



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# LOVE.

## A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS.

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TO

JAMES MUSPRATT, ESQ.

OF LIVERPOOL.

My dear Friend,

A few honest words may convey a great deal. This Play is justly and joyfully dedicated to you.

With affection and gratitude,

Yours,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

*November*, 1839.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

Upon the pleasant borders of the beautiful Loch Ard, and of its appropriate neighbours, the Dhu Lochan and Loch Kolm, the greater portion of this drama was composed. It was a delightful task;—cheered, as it was, by the kind solicitude of my friend, Robert Dick, Esq., and of his family. Never shall I forget the time I passed under their hospitable roof—to the calm and content afforded me by which I attribute no small portion of the success—if I may say "success"—that attended my labours. Never shall I forget the anxious, warm-hearted host, who one day laughingly snatched my fishing-rod from my hand when I was going to play truant; and, admonishing me that school-hours were not over yet—for it was noon, and I had limited myself to the evening for indulgence in "the angle"—set me to my book and pencil; on which occasion the fruit of my compelled industry was one of the best scenes in the play.

My friend, John Forster, Esq., of Lincoln's-Inn Fields, must accept my thanks for service and kindness similar to what he has frequently rendered me before; and for suggesting several important improvements in the conduct of the plot—particularly with regard to the last act.

Planché, my brother-dramatist, has laid me under obligations, which I have great pleasure in acknowledging. Had the drama been his own, he could not have shown more anxiety for its success. He has rendered me essential service where I stood very much in need of it, and I cordially thank him.

My friend, George Bartley, Esq., has added to his claims upon my gratitude, on the score of "The Hunchback" and "The Wife."

I owe it to Mr. and Mrs. Mathews to acknowledge that, besides having granted me the highest terms I ever yet received for a play—they have displayed the most unstinted liberality in preparing my drama for representation.

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## CHARACTERS.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT COVENT GARDEN IN 1839.)

| | |
|---|---|
| *Duke* | MR. COOPER. |
| *Prince Frederick* | MR. SELBY |
| *Ulrick* | MR. DIDDEAR. |
| *Sir Rupert* | MR. J. VINING. |
| *Sir Otto* | MR. FITZJAMES. |
| *Sir Conrad* | MR. WIGAN. |
| *Huon* | MR. ANDERSON. |
| *Nicholas* | MR. AYLIFFE. |
| *Stephen* | MR. W. H. PAYNE. |
| *Falconer* | MR. COLLETT. |
| *Herald* | MR. C. J. SMITH. |
| *Empress* | MRS. BROUGHAM. |
| *Countess* | MISS E. TREE. |
| *Catherine* | MADAME VESTRIS. |
| *Christina* | MISS LEE. |



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# LOVE.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Room in* CATHERINE'S *House.*

*Enter* CHRISTINA *and* NICHOLAS.

*Chris.* As thou lov'st thine ease, Nicholas, restrain curiosity. It is a steed that runs away with a man, without his knowing it, until it has thrown him. The danger is never found out until the mischief is done. Besides, it is a woman's palfrey, which it befits not a man to ride. What signifies it to thee, who comes into the house, whatsoever be the hour, so it is I that let him in?

*Nic.* Doubtless, Mistress Christina; yet a knock at the door, at two o'clock in the morning—and the door opening at that hour, to let a man into the house—and that man a gay young spark—may make a body wonder, tho' he have no more than the ordinary stock of curiosity.

*Chris.* Propriety, Nicholas, belongs to no one hour out of the twenty-four, more than to any other hour. It was fit that the young spark should come into the house, or I should not have let him in. And now mark what I say to you. Play not the house-dog any more. Do you mind? Let not your watchfulness interfere with your sleep, else, besides your sleep, it may peril your bed and board; but, if thou hearest a knock when thou liest on the weary side of thee, and wakest,

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draw thy nightcap over thine ears, and turn on the other side; and so to sleep again—yea, tho' it be four o'clock in the morning, good Nicholas!

*Nic.* I shall mind.

*Chris.* Do so, and thou shalt be wise. Duty, that becomes a busy-body, ever turns itself at last out of doors. Hast thou a good place, friend Nicholas?

*Nic.* Not a better in all Germany!

*Chris.* Then take my advice, and keep it.

*Nic.* I will.

*Chris.* Do! [NICHOLAS *goes out.*] My mistress will be discovered at last, well as she disguises herself, and plays the man. I wish she had not taken this fancy into her head; it may bring her into trouble. Ha! here she is; returned to her proper self. Who would believe that this was the spark I let into the house at two o'clock in the morning!

*Enter* CATHERINE.

*Cath.* [*speaking as she enters*]. Christina!

*Chris.* Madam!

*Cath.* O, here you are! Was not Nicholas with you, just now?

*Chris.* Yes; he is only this moment gone. I have just been giving him a lesson. He saw you when you came home last night.

*Cath.* Hush! secrets should be dumb to very walls!
A chink may change a nation's destinies,
And where are walls without one—that have doors?
Voice hath a giant's might, not a dwarf's bulk;
It passeth where a tiny fly must stop;
Conspiracy that does not lock it out
Fastens the door in vain. Let 's talk in whispers,
And then with mouth to ear. 'Tis strange, Christina,
So long I practise this deceit, and still
Pass for the thing I am not—ne'er suspected
The thing I am—'mongst those who know me best, too.
Yet would that all dissemblers meant as fair!
I play the cheat for very honesty,
To find a worthy heart out and reward it.
Far as the poles asunder are two things,

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Self-interest and undesigning love;
Yet no two things more like, to see them smile.
He is a conjuror, Christina, then,
Can tell you which is which! Shall I be won
Because I 'm valued as a money-bag,
For that I bring to him who winneth me?
No!—sooner matins in a cloister than
Marriage like that in open church! 'Tis hard
To find men out; they are such simple things!
Heaven help you! they are mostly bird-catchers,
That hold aloof until you 're in their nets,
And then they are down upon you and you 're caged,
Nor more your wings your own. I have scarcely slept!
*Chris.* You run great risk, methinks, for doubtful gain.
I wonder oft, when thus you play the man,
You should escape offence; for men there are,
By nature brawlers, and of stalwart limb,
Who of their fellows take advantage when
Of slight and stinted frame; and you do make
But, at the best, a green and osier man!
*Cath.* And there 's a little airy, fairy thing,
Call'd spirit; equalises statures, thews,
Ay, between dwarfs and giants, my Christina;
Whereof, altho' a woman, I have a share
Ekes my dimensions out, beyond what, else,
Might suffer those o'erbear, that do o'ertower me.
Besides, I have full pockets! That 's enough!
They call me "The young Stranger," and forbear
All question, since admonish'd 'twas my mood
To see the world *incognito;* which I vouch'd
With a full purse, that made the table ring,
As I cast it down; and startled some to see,
As Fortune's loaded horn had leap'd among them.
*Chris.* And think you none did e'er suspect your sex?
*Cath.* Sure on't; for once suspected, 'twere found out.
*Chris.* How do you hide the woman?
*Cath.* With the man!
It was my girlhood's study. Bless thee, child,
Good shows do beggar bad realities!
When I have dress'd my brows, my upper lip
And chin *en cavalier*, I take an oath,

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From such a time to such, I am a man.
And so I am! One quarrell'd with me once—
'Twas when I first began this masquerade.
"Look you," quoth I, "I never quarrel but
"To fight, nor fight except to kill; and so
"I make my mind up, sir, to die myself;
"So spare your *carte* and *tierce*. Set points to hearts,
"And at the signal, in!" His fire I quench'd,
As water turneth iron cinder-black,
In a white heat duck'd sudden into it!
*Christ.* But of your lovers?
*Cath.* Tell me who they are?
Alas, to have a rival in one's gown!
For 'tis the same thing—'tis your property.
The fabric of the sempstress to outdo
Heaven's fashioning—your body and your face;
A piece of web, a needle and a thread,
Give value to them that themselves have not!
Yet so it is with dames of noble birth,
And how much more, then, with a wretched serf!
For, tho' ten times enfranchised, such I am.
But what my betters stoop to, day by day
I spurn, Christina, spurn! nor deign to wed,
Except a man that loves me for myself!
*Chris.* And such a man, methinks, Sir Rupert seems.
*Cath.* Ah! he is poor!
*Chris.* And what of that? He is proud,
And seems as jealous of his poverty
Almost as you are.
*Cath.* Yes! He makes no suit.
He ever follows me, yet stands aloof,
While others lay close siege.
*Chris.* And of his rivals,
Prefer you any?
*Cath.* No. Have I not said,
When tax'd with paying court to me, the rest—
Yea one and all—instead of boasting me,
My person, or my mind, for their excuse,
Set forth my wealth; and ask if there 's a man,
Who would not wed a serf, with such a mine?
*Chris.* Sir Rupert sins not thus.

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*Cath.* Sir Rupert? No!
I bear him hard when I enact the man,
Which yet he suffers for the sake of Catherine,
My mad-cap cousin, as I call myself.
He is jealous of me; eyes me thus, as he'd
A spaniel that may bite as soon as fawn.
He never speaks of me—I mean myself—
Unless enforced, and then, to end the theme.
"Sir Rupert," said I to him once, with more
Than wont civility—O, could you see
What a fire-imp I am when I'm a man—
"Sir Rupert," said I to him once, "methinks
"Your friends are sorry judges of good fruit;
"And for an apple like to get a crab.
"Deal frankly with me, kin you know are kin
"All the world over; now a hug and kiss,
"And boxing faces next! It follows not,
"You know, since I am coz to Catherine,
"Because she has the tooth-ache, I have one?
"So, tell me, fair Sir Rupert,—for, indeed,
"Altho' a spoil'd boy, as 'tis lawful for
"A mother's pet to be, I wish you well,—
"What think you of my cousin Catherine?"
And what was his reply? Beginning, middle,
And end, as much as this,—"She is a woman."
But, faith, the answer came in such a tone,
Each single word might pass for a whole book.

*Chris.* I am sure Sir Rupert loves you: he has all
The signs of a lover.

*Cath.* What are they?

*Chris.* He sighs.

*Cath.* Sighs! Listen to me! [*drawing a deep sigh.*]
There, girl! what think you now
Of that, for a sigh! and say you I'm in love?
I will coin sighs for you, fast as the mint
Coins ducats. Shows are all uncertain things,
Unless the cheek indeed grows lank and pale—
Yet that may be with frequent lack of dinner.
So, 'tis betwixt the heart and appetite!
O for a sign would be infallible,
And him to show it, I would see it on!

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*Chris.* Sir Rupert?
*Cath.* What is that to you? Dear girl,
Whoe'er it be, I pray that I may love him!
The countess flies her hawk to-day. I'll make
Essay of mine.
*Chris.* A most strange lady, she!
A form of flesh, and heart of ice.
*Cath.* Not so.
A heart, Christina, all possess'd of pride—
That hath no place for any passion else.
Suitors pursue her, still she yields to none,
But, hard requital! pays their love with scorn;
That, out of troops, remains at last but one,
The Prince of Milan.
*Chris.* Will she ever love?
Her heart is scarce the soil to root love's flower!
*Cath.* No telling how love thrives! to what it comes!
Whence grows! 'Tis e'en of as mysterious root,
As the pine that makes its lodging of the rock;
Yet there it lives, a huge tree, flourishing,
Where you would think a blade of grass would die!
What is love's poison, if it be not hate?
Yet in that poison, oft is found love's food.
Frowns that are clouds to us, are sun to him!
He finds a music in a scornful tongue,
That melts him more than softest melody—
Passion perverting all things to its mood,
And, spite of nature, matching opposites!
But, come, we must attire us for the field.
The field—the field—Christina, were 't to take
The field in love!—a fair and honest fight!
I wonder, be there one true man on the earth?
But if there be, I one true woman know
To match him—were he true as native gold.
*Chris.* I think Sir Rupert one.
*Cath.* Sir Rupert!—Umph!
If he were rich, and I as poor as he,
I 'd tell you "yes," or "no," within the week.
Heaven keep me from the proof!—I should not like
To find Sir Rupert out. Come. Let me wed
The man that loves me, or else die a maid!

[*They go out.*

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SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Duke's Castle.*

*The* COUNTESS—HUON *reading to her.*

*Countess.* Give o'er! I hate the poet's argument!
'Tis falsehood—'tis offence. A noble maid
Stoop to a peasant!—Ancestry, sire, dam,
Kindred and all of perfect blood, despised
For love!

*Huon.* The peasant, though of humble stock,
High nature did ennoble—

*Countess.* What was that?
Mean you to justify it? But, go on.

*Huon.* Not to offend.

*Countess.* Offend! No fear of that,
I hope, 'twixt thee and me! I pray you, sir,
To recollect yourself, and be at ease,
And as I bid you, do. Go on.

*Huon.* Descent,
You 'll grant, is not alone nobility,
Will you not? Never yet was line so long,
But it beginning had: and that was found
In rarity of nature, giving one
Advantage over many; aptitude
For arms, for counsel, so superlative
As baffled all competitors, and made
The many glad to follow him as guide
Or safeguard; and with title to endow him,
For his high honour or to gain some end
Supposed propitious to the general weal,
On those who should descend from him entail'd.
Not in descent alone, then, lies degree,
Which from descent to nature may be traced,
Its proper fount! And that, which nature did,
You'll grant she may be like to do again;
And in a very peasant, yea, a slave,
Enlodge the worth that roots the noble tree.
I trust I seem not bold, to argue so.

*Countess.* Sir, when to me it matters what you seem,
Make question on't. If you have more to say,
Proceed—yet mark you how the poet mocks

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Himself your advocacy; in the sequel
His hero is a hind in masquerade!
He proves to be a lord.
*Huon.* The poet sinn'd
Against himself, in that! He should have known
A better trick, who had at hand his own
Excelling nature to admonish him,
Than the low cunning of the common craft.
A hind, his hero, won the lady's love:
He had worth enough for that! Her heart was his.
Wedlock joins nothing, if it joins not hearts.
Marriage was never meant for coats of arms.
Heraldry flourishes on metal, silk,
Or wood. Examine as you will the blood,
No painting on't is there!—as red, as warm,
The peasant's as the noble's!
*Countess.* Dost thou know
Thou speak'st to me?
*Huon.* 'Tis therefore so I speak.
*Countess.* And know'st thy duty to me?
*Huon.* Yes.
*Countess.* And see'st
My station, and thine own?
*Huon.* I see my own.
*Countess.* Not mine?
*Huon.* I cannot, for the fair
O'ertopping height before.
*Countess.* What height?
*Huon.* Thyself!
That towerest 'bove thy station!—Pardon me!
O, wouldst thou set thy rank before thyself?
Wouldst thou be honour'd for thyself, or that?
Rank that excels its wearer, doth degrade.
Riches impoverish, that divide respect.
O, to be cherish'd for oneself alone!
To owe the love that cleaves to us to nought
Which fortune's summer—winter—gives or takes!
To know that, while we wear the heart and mind,
Feature and form, high Heaven endow'd us with,
Let the storm pelt us, or fair weather warm,
We shall be loved! Kings, from their thrones cast down,

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Have bless'd their fate that they were valued for
Themselves and not their stations, when some knee,
That hardly bow'd to them in plenitude,
Has kiss'd the dust before them, stripp'd of all.
*Countess* [*confused.*] I nothing see that 's relative in this,
That bears upon the argument.
*Huon.* O, much,
Durst but my heart explain.
*Countess.* Hast thou a heart?
I thought thou wast a serf; and, as a serf,
Hadst thought and will none other than thy lord's;
And so no heart—that is, no heart of thine own.
But since thou say'st thou hast a heart, 'tis well
Keep it a secret;—let me not suspect
What, were it e'en suspicion, were thy death.
Sir, did I name a banquet to thee now,
Thou lookedst so?
*Huon.* To die, for thee, were such.
*Countess.* Sir?
*Huon.* For his master oft a serf has died,
And thought it sweet,—and may not, then, a serf
Say for his mistress, 'twere a feast to die?
*Countess.* Thou art presumptuous—very—so no wonder
If I misunderstood thee. Thou'dst do well
To be thyself, and nothing more.
*Huon.* Myself—
*Countess.* Why, art thou not a serf! What right hast thou
To set thy person off with such a bearing?
And move with such a gait?—to give thy brow
The set of noble's, and thy tongue his phrase?
Thy betters' clothes sit fairer upon thee
Than on themselves, and they were made for them.
I have no patience with thee—can't abide thee!
There are no bounds to thy ambition, none!
How durst thou e'er adventure to bestride
The war-horse—sitting him, that people say
Thou, not the knight, appear'st his proper load?
How durst thou touch the lance, the battle-axe,

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And wheel the flaming falchion round thy head,
As thou wouldst blaze the sun of chivalry?
I know—my father found thy aptitude,
And humour'd it, to boast thee off? He may chance
To rue it; and no wonder if he should;
If others' eyes see that they should not see
Shown to them by his own.

*Huon.* O, lady—

*Countess.* What?

*Huon.* Heard I aright?

*Countess.* Aright—what heard'st thou, then?
I would not think thee so presumptuous
As through thy pride to misinterpret me.
It were not for thy health,—yea, for thy life!
Beware sir. It would set my quiet blood,
On haste for mischief to thee, rushing thro'
My veins, did I believe—! Thou art not mad;
Knowing thy vanity, I aggravate it.
Thou know'st 'twere shame, the lowest free-woman
That follows in my train should think of thee?

*Huon.* I know it, lady.

*Countess.* That I meant to say,
No more. Don't read such books to me again.
I would you had not learn'd to read so well,
I had been spared your annotations.
For the future, no reply, when I remark.
Hear, but don't speak—unless you're told—and then
No more than you're told;—what makes the answer up,
No syllable beyond.

*Enter* FALCONER *with Hawk.*

My falconer! So.
An hour I'll fly my hawk.

*Fal.* A noble bird,
My lady, knows his bells, is proud of them.

*Countess.* They are no portion of his excellence;
It is his own! 'Tis not by them he makes
His ample wheel; mounts up, and up, and up
In spiry rings, piercing the firmament,
Till he o'ertops his prey; then gives his stoop
More fleet and sure than ever arrow sped!

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How nature fashion'd him for his bold trade!
Gave him his stars of eyes to range abroad,
His wings of glorious spread to mow the air,
And breast of might to use them! I delight
To fly my hawk. The hawk 's a glorious bird;
Obedient—yet a daring, dauntless bird!
You may be useful, sir; wait upon me. [*They go out.*

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## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Country. On one side a Ruin, on the other a clump of lofty Trees.*

*Enter* PRINCE FREDERICK *and* ULRICK.

*Fred.* Now thou hast seen her, tell me what thou think'st.
Has she a heart?
*Ulrick.* I think her flesh and blood.
*Fred.* Ay, most sweet flesh, and blood most rich!
*Ulrick.* Then sure
She has a heart.
*Fred.* But where is it? None yet
Have found it out.
*Ulrick.* You mean a heart to love?
*Fred.* If not such heart, as well no heart at all!
*Ulrick.* Men tell a mine a hundred fathoms deep,
By certain signs that near the surface lie:
Are flesh and blood more fallible than clay?
Take but her face—there's not a feature on't,
But vouches for the mood. Require you more?
Her limbs and body give you proof on proof.
If these convince you not, essay her voice;
'Tis of the stop befits the melting vein.
There's nought without but with her sex consists,
Pronouncing her its pattern, passing rich!
And can she lack the heart, the want of which
Would turn such affluence to poverty?
Prove nature but a niggard, after all,

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Where she should seem to be most beautiful?
She has a heart, sir; and a heart to love!
*Fred.* How comes it, then, I plead a bootless suit,
And not a boy at wooing? Had I chance
With a heart, were it not wholly occupied,
I never fail'd to find some footing in it
If not instate myself with ease;—with dames,
I own, less lofty, tho' on lighter terms
Than gift of hand for life. Why fail I here?
*Ulrick.* Hast thou no rival?
*Fred.* None.
*Ulrick.* Thou art sure?
*Fred.* I am.
Dishearten'd at a race that hath no goal,
Or one that seems to distance on approach,
My rivals leave the field to me alone.
*Ulrick.* Thou mayst have rivals whom thou know'st not of.
*Fred.* No! I have press'd her father oft thereon,
And learn'd the history, beginning, close
Of every siege of wooing; ending each
In mortified retreat.
*Ulrick.* You may have rivals
Unknown to him. Love joys in mystery;
And when you think it countless miles away,
Is lurking close at hand.
*Fred.* You are still at fault.
She has no favour'd lover—cannot have.
The thing is out of chance, impossible!
*Ulrick.* Call nought impossible, till thou hast proved
That passion hath essay'd it, and been foil'd;
And set this down—nature is nature still,
And, thought to swerve, is at the bottom true.
Thy mistress is not stone, but flesh and blood,
Wherein doth lodge the juice of sympathy;
Which, more refined in woman than in man,
In woman sways it measurelessly stronger!
The essence of the sex is that wherein
We win a gift of their sweet forms and souls—
The tenderness for some especial one
Who then, 'midst millions, seems to stand alone.

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That being absent, then there is no sex!
So where sex is, that also must be there—
As where the sun, also the light and heat.
So of two issues, set thy mind to one—
She has found the man, who stands 'mongst millions sole,
Or he is yet to find, and thou not he.
*Fred.* Thou namest two issues—I can find a third.
*Ulrick.* Where is it?
*Fred.* Here. As many streams will go
To make one river up, one passion oft
Predominant, all others will absorb.
*Ulrick.* What passion, swoln in her, drinks up the rest?
*Fred.* Pride.
*Ulrick.* Of her beauty, or her rank, or what?
*Fred.* Pride of herself! intolerant of all
Equality—nor that its bounds alone—
Oppressive to the thing that is beneath her.
Say that she waves me off when I advance,
She spurns the serf that bows to her at distance.
Suitor and secretary fare alike.
I woo for scorn, he for no better serves—
Nay, rather worse comes off.
*Ulrick.* Her secretary?
*Fred.* The only one of all his wretched class
Her presence brooks; for he is useful to her,
Reads with a music, as a lute did talk:
Writes, as a graver did the letters trace:
Translates dark languages—for learning which
She hath a strange conceit: is wise in rare
Philosophy: hath mastery besides
Of all sweet instruments that men essay—
The hautboy, viol, lute.
*Ulrick.* A useful man
Your highness draws! What kind of thing is he
To look upon?
*Fred.* 'Faith, proper, sir, in trunk,
Feature, and limb; to envy, though a serf.
But, err I not, a most unhappy man,
And, for his service, weary of his life.
*Ulrick.* O love, a wilful, wayward thing thou art!
Twere strange! 'twere very strange!

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*Fred.* What? what were strange?
What said'st thou now, apostrophising love?
*Ulrick.* I said it was a wilful, wayward thing,
And so it is—fantastic and perverse!
Which makes its sport of persons and of seasons,
Takes its own way, no matter right or wrong.
It is the bee that finds the honey out,
Where least you'd dream 'twould seek the nectarous store.
And 'tis an arrant masquer—this same love—
That most outlandish, freakish faces wears
To hide its own! Looks a proud Spaniard now;
Now a grave Turk; hot Ethiopian next;
And then phlegmatic Englishman; and then
Gay Frenchman; by and by, Italian, at
All things a song; and in another skip,
Gruff Dutchman;—still is love behind the masque!
It is a hypocrite!—looks every way
But that where lie its thoughts!—will openly
Frown at the thing it smiles in secret on;
Shows most like hate, e'en when it most is love;
Would fain convince you it is very rock
When it is water! ice when it is fire!
Is oft its own dupe, like a thorough cheat;
Persuades itself 'tis not the thing it is;
Holds up its head, purses its brows, and looks
Askant, with scornful lip, hugging itself
That it is high disdain—till suddenly
It falls on its knees, making most piteous suit
With hail of tears, and hurricane of sighs,
Calling on heaven and earth for witnesses
That it is love, true love, nothing but love!
*Fred.* You would not say the lady loves the serf?
*Ulrick.* I would say nothing in particular,
Save upon proof. Let me together note
The serf and lady, I will speak to the point,
Or, baffled, hold my peace.
*Fred.* To that intent
I sent for thee,—for thou art keen of sight
To pry into the inmost thoughts of men,
And find the proper ends towards which they aim,
Howe'er dissembled by assumed purpose.

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*Ulrick.* Your pardon, sir; your father bade me come
To warn you, in these times of turbulence,
He means to stand aloof, and take no part
Between the barons and the empress,—so
Your course you know to shape. What company
Is this?

*Fred.* The countess flies her hawk to-day,
And these are falconers in advance of her.
Those nearest us, observe. The lady first,
Is a rich serf, supposed love-daughter to
The former duke, who left her well endow'd.
Those with her are her suitors; but with none
She'll mate, believing that her wealth is prized
Beyond herself,—nor does she widely err,
Though some might think her beauty dower enough!
There is one who follows her indeed for love,
A man of heart; a gentleman, but poor,
Who his revenue spends upon his back;
I say he follows her: he woos her not,
Through pride, 'tis said, lest he be thought to hunt
The dross so much he needs;—whence I esteem
His chance the best. Mark! he is last of all.
Let us retire a space; there's company
Enough without us here. Some minutes yet
Before the countess will alight, and then
Remains the hill to climb. So bright a day,
Methinks, will scarce go by without a frown.

[*They retire.*

*Enter* CATHERINE, SIR CONRAD, SIR OTTO, *and* SIR RUPERT.

*Cath.* Spy you my hawk? 'Twas here he struck his bird,
And vanish'd from my sight.

*Sir Otto.* Or I mistake,
Or from his stoop he rose again, and skimm'd
The brow of yonder copse.

*Sir Con.* I mark'd not if
He soar'd a second time.

*Cath.* Were I a man,



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And waited on a lady that did hawk,
I'd keep her bird in sight! Sir Rupert, what
Say you? Where shall we go and seek my hawk,
Or lurks he hereabouts?
*Sir Rup.* I saw him not
At all.
*Cath.* Not see my hawk at all? You'll do
For a falconer; so! Had I that boy,
My hair-brain'd cousin, whom you say you know,
And fair Sir Rupert hath such fancy for,
He plays the wasp so well—(a novel taste!
As I can vouch he is indeed no bee,
To pay you with his honey for his sting!)—
Had I that scape-grace with me, he would find
My hawk ere you began to look for it.—
How loth these friends are to part company!
Now will I scatter them [*aside*]. Who finds my hawk
Deserves to kiss my hand, and he shall do it.
[SIR OTTO *and* SIR CONRAD *run off*.
What! like you not my wages, sir, you stand
Nor make a proffer of your services!
*Sir Rup.* To kiss your hand would be most rich
reward,
If love's sweet gift to him who sought your love;
But, if love's gift, to one alone 'twere made
And not to any one!
*Cath.* Love's gift—what's that?
Most thankless proffer made by empty hand.
Give me bright diamonds, I shall have bright eyes.
When fetch'd desert its value and was poor?—
A hundred years ago?—but it was left
A legacy, and then they found it out!
The world, they say, is an old churl,—'tis not.
Can you afford to feast, you shall be feasted;
You shall not dine at home one day out of three;
Nay, you may shut up house, for bed and board.
*Sir Rup.* You are a young ascetic.
*Cath.* Am I so?
Well, if I am 'tis in the family—
Witness my cousin whom you love so well.
A young ascetic say you? Sir, I am

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A young Diogenes in petticoats.
I have strings of axioms. Here are more for you.
They say that beauty needs not ornament;
But sooth she fares the better having it,
Although she keeps it in her drawer.
*Sir Rup.* Indeed?
*Cath.* Indeed, and very deed. For I have known
Bracelets and rings do miracles, where nature
Play'd niggard, and did nothing, or next to it;
Beat lotions in improving of the skin,
And mend a curve the surgeon had given up
As hopeless.
*Sir Rup.* Nay, you speak in irony.
*Cath.* I speak in truth, speaking in irony;
For irony is but a laughing truth
Told of a worthless thing. Will you have more?
You shall then. Have you never heard it said,
Or never dream'd you such a thing as this—
That fortune's children never yet lack'd wit,
Virtue, grace, beauty, tho' it tax'd the owners
To find them out? Once an exception chanced,
I know not in what year or part of the world,
But, while men stared at the anomaly,
One parasite, less comet-struck than the rest,
Turn'd up a heap of rubbish of all things
Good men and wise and men of taste eschew,
And found them underneath! Take this along, tho',
The owner never knew their value, for
He ne'er had need to go to market with them.
Why, what a man you are, Sir Rupert! Fie!
What! not a word to say? Let's change the theme then:
The argument shall be, that you're in love;
The which shall I affirm while you deny.
I say you are in love. Come, prove me wrong!
*Sir Rup.* I never argue only for the sake
Of argument.
*Cath.* Come, come, you have a tongue!
You are in love—I'll prove it by fifty things.
And first and foremost, you deny it, sir;
A certain sign, with certain accidents—
As dulness, moodiness, moroseness, shyness.



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I 'd stake my credit on one single fact
Thou bearest out to admiration—
A lover is the dullest thing on earth.
Who but a lover—or his antipodes,
A wise man—ever found out that the use
Of his tongue was to hold it? Thou must be in love,
And for one sovereign reason, after which
I 'll give no other—thou dost follow me!

*Sir Rup.* Madam, altho' I may not use my tongue,
I do my eyes and ears.

*Cath.* But not your feet.
Will you not seek my hawk, and run a chance
To kiss my hand—or would it trouble you,
In case you found my hawk, to use your lips?
But I forget 'tis now your turn to speak,
And prove my oaks of arguments are reeds.
Have you no word?—or am not I worth one?
Or must I take your side, and beat myself?
I 'll take your side, then. You are not in love,
Loving yourself too well!

*Sir Rup.* You wrong me there.

*Cath.* Why, see what pains you take with your person! How
You dress!

*Sir Rup.* 'Tis not my vanity, but pride.
I am too poor to put mean habit on.
Whose garments wither shall meet faded smiles
Even from the worthy, so example sways,
So the plague poverty is loath'd, and shunn'd
The luckless wight who wears her fatal spot!
Want, but look full; else you may chance to starve,
Unless you 'll stoop to beg. You force me, lady,
To make you my severe confessional.
From such prostration never can I rise
The thing I was before. Farewell—

*Cath.* [*looks out.*] Farewell!
What! go not to fetch my hawk, and there
He sits upon his quarry, new alit?
Or want you earnest of your wages? Well,
There, kiss my hand, and go and fetch my hawk,
And then be paid in full.

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*Sir Rup.* If I could speak—
*Cath.* My hawk were off again, ere you had done;
So I would lose his service—thou my thanks!
*Sir Rup.* I will secure him straight. [*Goes out.*
*Cath.* I gave him pain,
Tho' he has borne it with a noble heart!
I hope he will not make me weep in turn.
Symptoms I feel of something like a shower—
A slight one—but it must not fall. They are gone.
A noble heart! a very noble heart!

*Enter* SIR RUPERT.

*Sir Rup.* I have miss'd the hawk—he has taken wing again.
*Cath.* 'Twas not your fault—you did the best you could.
I am not angry. There 's my hand for you.
Mark'd you which course he took? Then, come along,
We 'll hunt for him together.
*Sir Rup.* Stop—it lowers!
There's shelter here.
[SIR RUPERT *and* CATHERINE *approach the Ruins —Enter the* COUNTESS *and* HUON, *with* Attendants—PRINCE FREDERICK *and* ULRICK *come forward a little, but so as not to be noticed.*
*Countess* [*to Sir Rupert.*] Will there not be a storm?
*Huon.* I am sure there will.
*Countess.* I ask'd not you to speak! When you should speak
It shall be shown—it shall be plain. Be sure
It is so, ere you give your counsel, sir.
[HUON *retires to the group of trees, and leans against one of them.*
Do you not think there 's threatening of a storm?
*Sir Rup.* Yes, lady. When the heavens look troubled thus,
Earth can't be long at peace.
*Fred.* The only man
She brooketh speech from, with complacency.
Observe her now when I accost her. Madam,

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Will't please you take my escort to your coach,
At the hill foot I see attending on you?
*Countess* [*haughtily*]. The rain is on, sir; I am better here.

SIR OTTO *and* SIR CONRAD *enter in haste.*

*Sir Otto.* A storm! a storm! Those pitch-black clouds that speed
In wild career to meet the sun, as though
In envy of his light to blot him out,
Come right against the wind—a token they
Bring thunder!
*Sir Con.* Yes; I saw a forked flash,
And while I held my breath and listen'd, heard
The distant clap. [*To Sir Otto*] Avoid the trees; their tops
With boastful towering, dare the threat'ning bolt
To strike them!

[SIR OTTO *and* SIR CONRAD *approach the ruins.*

*Ulrick.* Do you note? she does not move—
What keeps her there? Is that the scorned serf,
Leans drooping 'gainst the trunk of the tall tree,
Lends him pernicious shelter?—Clear as day!
*Fred.* 'Tis dark as night!
*Ulrick.* What?—O, the storm! My lord,
I meant not that—your doubts are clearing up.
Look at the serf and lady.
*Cath.* [*to Sir Rup.*] Pray you speak
To the Countess—tell her she's in danger there
To stand so near the trees.
*Sir Rup.* Madam—
*Cath.* Apace
The storm comes on! 'Twill soon be overhead—
Ay! there's the thunder now, and loud enough.
She heard not. Call to her again. She bears
That you accost her.
*Sir Rup.* She is fond of you.
*Cath.* Yes; but you mark'd her scorn of Huon, now?
*Sir Rup.* Madam! Madam! Pray you
Come from beneath the trees. It lightens fast—
A bolt may strike you, madam!

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*Countess.* I do hear you, sir.
*Ulrick.* The peril of the serf transfixes her!
Her life, be sure, is only part of his!
A common act of charity it were
Command him thence; but, conscious of the cause,
Stronger than charity, would prompt the act,
And fearing to betray it worse than death,
She perils her own life! It is not right
To leave her there—go to her—take her thence!
*Fred.* Your pardon, lady, but you must not brave
The lightning. Come into the open space:
There's shelter, with less chance of penalty,
Beneath this time-worn ruin. [*Thunder and lightning.*]
Heavens, how near!
Almost together came the clap and flash!
The trees are all on fire—the serf is struck!
[HUON *staggers from the tree—the* COUNTESS
*rushes to him, clasping him.*
*Countess.* No! no!—O Heaven, he's dead! why
would he stand
Beneath the trees!—What, Huon!—speak to me!
Show me thou hear'st me! Let me see some signs
Of life! Why, Huon! Huon!—He is dead!
*Ulrick.* Lady, he is not dead, but only stunn'd.
'Twas but a shock, altho' a heavy one.
His colour comes—you see his eye-lids ope'—
So please you, leave the charge of him to me.
*Countess.* I thank you, sir—am sorry such a load
Should burden you. Would some of my attendants
Were here, to ease you on't. How dread a thing
Is death, when sight on't makes one not oneself!
Grows it not lighter, sirs?—Ay, there's the sky.
Almost as soon as come the storm is gone.
Pray leave him to himself. 'Twas but a shock;
It shames me, such a load should burthen you.
*Ulrick.* As yet, he cannot stand.
*Countess.* Indeed?—O!—ay!—
It was a heavy shock. I have a horror,
And always had, of lightning. Do you know
It takes away my wits? Did you not feel
As I did, Catherine, when they thought the lightning

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Had kill'd the serf? A dreadful thing is death!
And most of all, by lightning! where is my hawk?
O, they had charge to bring him after me,
And here they come. Let's meet them, Catherine.
[*Going, stops and turns to look at* HUON.
*Ulrick.* He still grows better, madam.
*Countess.* Who, sir?—O,
The serf?—Why, Catherine, where's your hawk?
*Cath.* I have lost him.
*Countess.* I hope the lightning has not struck him.
Come:
We'll have fair weather yet

*Enter two or three* Attendants.

Go, some of you,
Relieve his lordship from his load.
[*Two of the* Attendants *take* HUON, *and lead him off, the* COUNTESS *watching.*
*Ulrick.* You see
He is unhurt.
*Countess.* My lord?—I see.—You take
Great interest in my serf. The sun is out;
My hawk against the field! Come, Catherine.
[*All go out, except* FREDERICK *and* ULRICK.
*Ulrick.* You see, my lord; and seeing, comprehend.
Straight will I to the Duke, and tell him this.
A kingdom to a hawk, she loves the serf!
[*They go out, severally.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*A Chamber in the Castle.*

*Enter* DUKE *and* ULRICK.

*Duke.* She loves the serf? Impossible!
*Ulrick.* My lord,
'Tis true.
*Duke.* It cannot be! Her pride alone
Forbids belief. More loftily, my lord,

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The stateliest of all her ancestors
Ne'er wore his rank, than she.
*Ulrick.* She loves the serf.
*Duke.* Give me some reason stronger than averment
*Ulrick.* Such I have given already. What, my liege
But love, such contradiction could beget?
When did cold scorn look, speak, and act like love?
Woman or man is known by fits and starts,
More than by habits, which may be put on;
For those so take the judgment off its guard,
That inmost thoughts are shown. With care for him,
She all forgot herself. Had doubt remain'd,
It had vanish'd when assurance of his safety
Restored collectedness, which brought with it
Slight of the thing that, but a moment gone,
Seem'd essence of her being.
*Duke.* You are right.
'Tis the solution of the mystery,
That with the progress of the season, comes not
The fruit it promised; and no sign of blight,
Canker, or mildew, but the blossom rich
As ever knit into the perfect fruit
Fulfill'd its pride in the crowning. Yes; her girlhood—
Now longer past than some would choose to own—
Put forth a bloom like many another's prime,
That often then I fancied love would come.
When her prime came nor love along with it,
With many a suitor have I sigh'd to think
Her breast was ne'er intended lodge for him
It seem'd most fitted for, and little dream'd
The guest we miss'd, already was within.
*Ulrick.* And never fear'd the serf?
*Duke.* No.
*Ulrick.* Was't not strange?
*Duke.* Not to consider him as I did; creature
Made for her pride to vent its mood upon—
Her pride insufferable—which alone
Seem'd fruit of her capricious womanhood.
*Ulrick.* That foil'd you.
*Duke.* When the serf was but a boy—
His mistress then an infant—taken with



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His forward parts, I put them to the test
Of scholarship, which they robustly stood,
A hundred-fold repaying cultivation.
Nor stopp'd I there; but, as he grew to manhood,
Gave training to him in those exercises,
Wherein our youths of gentle blood indulge—
Preludes to feats in peace, and deeds in war—
That I might boast a serf supreme in arms;
As many a knight unwillingly has own'd,
Accepting challenge to make proof of him.
*Ulrick.* What didst propose him for?
*Duke.* Instructor first,
Then page and secretary to my child.
*Ulrick.* Instructor, didst thou say? Companion of
Her hours of privacy? Her age was then—
*Duke.* Twelve, if I err not.—Yes; Twelve times I then
Had bless'd the day that gave my daughter birth.
*Ulrick.* Her spring was mellowing into summer then,
Young summer! at whose genial glow, the heart
Finds wishes and affections shooting up,
Known but by name before, and thrills and swells
With rapture of the strange and plenteous verdure.
She prosper'd with his aid?
*Duke.* O, wond'rously.
*Ulrick.* And loved at first her tutor?
*Duke.* Much: but soon
A change, which grew with her, the nearer she
Approach'd to womanhood. 'Twas distance first;
Then sullenness; then scorn, which she gave sway to
Incontinent, and chiefly of those feats
Of high address wherein he match'd the noble,
And which it seem'd her pastime he should practise
For recompense of aggravated spite.
*Ulrick.* Which he endured for love!
*Duke.* He dies! That ends it.
*Ulrick.* Yes; confirming it
Perhaps. Beware, sir, of a tragedy
So deep! Her scorn may melt at it, and help
Her tears to keep them flowing on, until
She weeps her life away. You must not play

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With a first passion, once it has taken root.
For it strikes deep—to the foundations even
Of the heart—entwining with the fibres there,
Of life itself, that, pluck the other up,
These haply come along.
*Duke.* He shall to exile,
Thousands of miles away, 'midst snows and deserts!
*Ulrick.* So may you tempt her, sir, with pity for him,
To turn a pilgrim—take up staff and scrip,
And follow him. She scorns him for the scorn
Which others' eyes behold his station with.
Removed from their regards, her rank unknown,
For her rich charms were his embraces, lodge
She'd change your palace for.
*Duke.* Impossible!
*Ulrick.* O, never did achievement rival Love's,
For daring enterprise and execution.
It will do miracles; attempt such things
As make ambition, fiery as it is,
Dull plodding tameness, in comparison.
Talk of the miser's passion for his store—
'Tis milk and water to the lover's, which
Defies the mines of earth and caves of ocean
To match its treasure! Talk of height, breadth, depth—
There is no measure for the lover's passion,
No bounds to what 'twill do!
*Duke.* Advise me, then,
What's best.
*Ulrick.* Induce the serf to marry. That
Were cure, in the end, for your fair daughter's passion;
Whose wound were his aggression, so resentment
Would blunt the edge of disappointed love.
For, doubt not, though she ne'er espouses him,
She trusts so far to keep him to herself,
As that he ne'er shall pillow with another.
*Duke.* 'Tis done. I have a bride for him, at once.
One of his class, enfranchised by the will
Of my cousin, who preceded me; indeed,
Supposed love-daughter to him, and endow'd
With wealth of his, that makes her coveted

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As fitting mate, by men of gentle blood.
Her humour 'tis to keep her freedom still;
But to my wish, as soon as known, she'll bend,
Aware I may encoil her in the mesh
My cousin's love or bounty freed her from.
But say I wed the serf to Catherine.
What profit then? My child may still persist
To keep her virgin state.

*Ulrick.* I should commit
To Heaven the election of her husband;—let
The tournament determine who shall wed her.

*Duke.* Thereto I have made provision in my will;
And further, sir, as I am due to death
Now many a year, and momentarily
Expect his summons, pray you keep by me
The little space I have to tarry yet—
For on your wisdom I have all reliance.
Your prince, I know, will not gainsay me here.
And when it pleaseth Heaven to leave my body
Without the breath it has inherited
So long, no minute lose, but take occasion
Of the fresh flow of sorrow in my child—
When her young heart is soften'd, and will mould
Itself into his will, who is no more—
To break to her, on this particular head,
My dying testament.

*Ulrick.* I shall remember.

*Duke.* So please you I shall join you with the empress,
Liege lady and good cousin to my child.
Executor.

*Ulrick.* I will discharge the trust.

*Duke.* My lord, send Huon to me. Question not,
Advise me not. He marries, or he dies.

[ULRICK *goes out.*

Life spent to waste! My pride become my shame!
For this I rear'd her—rear'd to tow'ring thoughts.
A gasp of being only left, and that
To sigh that being has been spent in vain
For her, last shoot of an illustrious tree!
I loved my serf, was vain of him, and made

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My vanity to smile through his deserts;
And now, their light is cloud to all my hopes.
Through mine own pride my high aspirings fall.
They shall not fall! Good bye to ruth! He dares
To love my child—to covet her I grudged
Surrender of to those could boast estate
Equal to mine! Born at my very foot,
How durst he lift his eyes so giddy high!
He comes. I see! The passion, never yet
I dream'd of, stares upon me, in his look,
His air, his gait. 'Tis dead—or he must die!

*Enter* HUON.

Huon!
*Huon.* My lord?
*Duke.* I have been thinking of thee.
*Huon.* My lord is ever good.
*Duke.* I have a notion
'Twould profit thee to marry.
*Huon.* Marry!
*Duke.* Yes.
*Huon.* I first must love.
*Duke.* And hast thou never loved?
Why art thou silent? Wherefore holds thy tongue
Its peace, and not thy cheek?
*Huon.* My cheek!
*Duke.* It talks!
A flush pass'd o'er it as I spoke to thee:
And now it talks again—and on the ground
Thou cast'st thine eye. "Thou first must love"—My friend,
Thou art in love already. Art thou not?
Art thou not, Huon?—Never mind, but keep
Thy secret.—I have fix'd that thou shalt marry.
*Huon.* My lord—
*Duke* [*interrupting him*]. I know it will advantage thee,
And I have look'd around my court to find
A partner for thee, and have lit on one.
*Huon* [*more earnestly*]. My Lord—
*Duke* [*interrupting him again*]. She has beauty, Huon, she has wealth;

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And what doth qualify her better still—
As of unequal matches discords grow—
She's of thy own class, Huon, she is a serf.
*Huon* [*impetuously*]. My lord—
*Duke* [*interrupting, indignantly*]. My serf!—How now?—Wouldst thou rebel?
*Huon.* Rebel, my lord!
*Duke.* I trust I was deceived!
I did not see defiance in thine eye,
And hear it on thy tongue? Thou wouldst not dare
So much as harbour wish to thwart thy lord,
Much less intent? Thou know'st him! know'st thyself!
Thou may'st have scruples—that thou canst not help;
But thou canst help indulging them in the face
Of thy lord's will. And so, as 'tis my will
Thou marry straight, and I have found thy match,
I'll draw a paper up, where thou shalt make
The proffer of thy hand to Catherine,
And thou shalt sign it, Huon. [*Writes.*
*Huon.* That I were dead!
O, what is death, compared to slavery!
Brutes may bear bondage—they were made for it,
When Heaven set man above them; but no mark,
Definite and indelible, it put
Upon one man to mark him from another,
That he should live his slave. O heavy curse!
To have thought, reason, judgment, feelings, tastes,
Passions, and conscience, like another man,
And not have equal liberty to use them,
But call his mood their master! Why was I born
With passion to be free—with faculties
To use enlargement—with desires that cleave
To high achievements—and with sympathies
Attracting me to objects fair and noble,—
And yet with power over myself as little
As any beast of burden? Why should I live?
There are of brutes themselves that will not tame,
So high in them is nature;—whom the spur
And lash, instead of curbing, only chafe
Into prouder mettle;—that will let you kill them,
Ere they will suffer you to master them.
I am a man, and live!

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*Duke.* Here, Huon, sign,
And Catherine is your wife.
*Huon.* I will not sign.
*Duke.* How now, my serf!
*Huon.* My lord, I am a man;
And, as a man, owe duty higher far
Than that I owe to thee, which Heaven expects
That I discharge. Didst thou command me murder,
Steal, commit perjury, or even lie,—
Should I do it, though thy serf? No! To espouse her,
Not loving her, were murder of her peace.
I will not sign for that! With like default,
To compass mastery of her effects,
Were robbery. I will not sign for that!
To swear what I must swear to make her mine,
Were perjury at the very altar. Therefore
I will not sign! To put forth plea of love,
Which not a touch of love bears witness to,
Were uttering a lie. And so, my lord,
I will not sign at all!—O, good my liege,
My lord, my master, ask me not to sign!
My sweat, my blood, use without sparing; but
Leave me my heart—a miserable one
Although it be! Coerce me not in that,
To make me do the thing my heart abhors!
I beg no more!

[*The* DUKE *draws his sword, and resolutely approaches* HUON. *At the same minute the* COUNTESS *enters, unperceived, and stops short.*

*Duke.* Huon, I love thee,
And would not do thee harm, unless compell'd.
Thou should'st not play with me, and shalt not. Take,
Therefore, thy choice—death, or the paper.
*Huon.* Death!
*Duke.* Thou makest thy mind up quickly, in a strait.
*Huon.* I do not wish to live.

[*Opens his vest, takes the point of the* DUKE'S *sword, and places it opposite his heart.*

Set here thy point;
'Tis right against my heart! Press firm and straight;
The more, the kinder! [*A pause.*

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*Duke.* As thou wishest death,
I will not kill thee for thy disobedience.
An hour I grant for calm reflection. Use it.
If, on the lapse of that brief space, I find
The page without addition, thou may'st learn
That even slavery hath its degrees,
Which make it sometimes sweet. Our felons throng
The galleys; but 'tis hard or we shall find
A bench and oar for thee. [*He goes out.*

*Huon.* My lord, come back!
My lord! What now my mind, be sure 'twill be
At the end of the hour! of the day! of my life!—My lord!
He does not hear, or will not. Most sweet cause
Of most insufferable misery,
Wouldst thou not weep at this? Couldst thou look on,
And keep pride sitting in thy woman's eye—
The proper throne of pity—which for me,
The melting queen has yet refused to fill,
But to a stern usurper all abandon'd!
Wouldst thou not weep? Or would my name alone—
My sole condition set 'gainst all myself;
The vivid thoughts, the feelings sensitive,
The quick affections, passions of a man,
Despite his misery of birthright; flesh,
Warm, warm; of as high vitality as tho'
His lot had been an heirdom to a throne—
Would that, prevailing 'gainst such odds as these,
Prevent thee? Yes! Thou wouldst not weep for me.
O, knew I what would make thee! Would my corpse?
Then to thy father! own my passion for thee,
Tell him his serf aspires to love his daughter,
Boasts of it, tho' he sends him to the galleys,
Will glory in it, chain'd beside the felon,
Ay, with the tasker's whip whirling above him,
Reiterate it, when he threatens me,
And when again he threatens, justify it,
On the broad rights of common human nature,
Till with his own hand he tranfixes me!
[*Following the* DUKE.

*Countess* [*interposing*]. Stop, Huon!—What's the matter?

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*Huon.* Huon—Huon!
Didst thou say Huon—and with gentleness?
Madam — my mistress — I am your slave! — I am nothing
But the poor serf!
*Countess.* See if that door is free
From list'ners.
*Huon* [*going to the door*]. There is no one here.
*Countess.* Come in,
And shut it again.
*Huon.* 'Tis shut.
*Countess.* Now, what's the matter
With my father and you?
*Huon.* He bade me sign that paper,
And I refused.
*Countess.* What is it? Let me see it.
*Huon* [*hands the paper, and watches the* COUNTESS *while she reads*]. How her eye fastens on the writing—seems
To grasp it, as her hand the paper! What!
Did she start? She did! O, wherefore?—What is this?
Her sweet face, that just now was all a calm,
Shows signs of brooding tempest! Yes, 'tis on—
Lowers on her brow, and flashes on her cheek,
Like cloud and lightning. How her bosom heaves!
What makes it heave? She has let the paper drop,
Yet there she stands as tho' she held it yet!
And where but now all was astir—now, all
Again is stillness! Dare I speak to her?
She is not like to faint—no—no—she breathes!
Her haughty spirit wakes in her again,
Towering, alas! as ne'er it did before.
*Countess* [*after a violent struggle, giving way*]. Huon, I die!
*Huon.* Heavens!—Mercy!
*Countess* [*bursting into tears*]. It is over.
Do not speak to me! Let my tears flow on!
*Huon.* Flow they for me?
*Countess.* I told you not to speak.
*Huon.* Sweet Heaven! your voice is tears!
Your looks are tears; your air, your motions, all

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Are tears! floods! floods! to those that course your
cheeks,
And fall more bright than diamonds on the hands
Which now I clasp to thee in supplication,
That thou wilt deign this once vouchsafe me audience,
To give my fatal passion vent before thee—
For years pent up within my wretched breast—
And then I'm mute for ever!

*Countess.* Huon, peace—
I know thou lov'st me.

*Huon.* Thou know'st it, dost thou?
And say'st it!—and mildly say'st it!
Not with a tone of scorn, not with a threat,
Nor accent yet of cold indifference
For the poor serf, who, body, soul, and all,
Not being worth a tithe of thee, yet dares
To love thee!—dares to wish for thee!—yes, wish,
Altho' he knows thee out of reach of him,
As the sun!—as the stars—a million, million times
Beyond the sun! The poor despised serf,
Despised of himself—of thee—of every one—
Thou see'st he loves thee, and thou deign'st to say it!
Say it with pity—with most tender pity!
Behold'st him kneeling at thy feet, and know'st
The passion throws him there, and suffer'st him
To stay there!—Let him die there! Let him die
At thy feet! [*Falls at her feet.*

*Countess.* Rise, Huon!—Huon!—Hear'st thou me?
And dost thou not obey me? Wilt thou not?
Listen to me!—I do entreat thee, Huon,
As thou dost love me, rise!

*Huon* [*rising to his knee*]. Again! "As thou dost
love me, Huon!" And thy voice did sound
As 'twere the voice of one that loved again!
Thou start'st at that! and terror all at once
Looks from the eyes, whence something look'd before
I'd give the vision of my own to see there
But for one other moment, so it set
My soul ablaze with hope!—Can I believe it,
My arm encircles thee!

*Countess* [*with dignity*]. Remove it.

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*Huon.* Heaven!
Thou changest?—Yes!—Thou art returning fast
To what thou wast before.
*Countess.* No, Huon—but
Obey me—kneel no longer at my feet,
But rise. It pleaseth me thou dost my will.
Huon, wilt do my will?
*Huon.* Wilt do thy will?
It is the nature of my blood as much
As its colour—current! In thy every mood,
I will obey thee, lady.
*Countess.* Promise me
Thou'lt do the thing I bid thee.
*Huon.* What is it?
*Countess.* Promise me first, and then I'll name it to thee.
Huon, wilt do the thing I wish?
*Huon.* I will.
*Countess.* But swear thou'lt do it.
*Huon.* Yes. What shall I swear by?
*Countess.* Thy love for me.
*Huon.* Then, by my love for thee,
I'll do the thing thou bidd'st me.
*Countess.* Sign the paper!—
Thou art about to speak—but don't—don't, Huon,
As thou wouldst not offend me; as 'twould grieve me—
I won't say, anger me—thou shouldst offend me.
Listen! I'll bear that thou shouldst love me, if
Thou signest—else command thee ever from me.
Wilt thou not? Speak not—give me acts, not words.
Or sign it, or begone!
*Huon.* I'll keep my word,
And so do both. [*Takes paper to table, and peruses it.*

*Enter* Attendant.

*Countess* [*to* Attendant]. Is Catherine in the castle?
If not, go to her house, and bring her hither.
*Attendant.* She is in the castle. Now she enter'd it.
*Countess.* Conduct her to my chamber. Stay. My chaplain—
Tell him, and do it straight, to wait me in

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The chapel. Tarry. See that the chapel else
Is clear—make sure of it. That ascertain'd,
Take post at the door, and mind that none do enter,
Except the serf and the two ladies that
Shall follow him. I shall be one. A mouse
Besides, thou diest! [Attendant *goes out.*
*Huon* [*signs paper*]. It is sign'd—Farewell! [*Going.*
*Countess.* Stay!—To the full thou must redeem thy pledge.
Unless thou marriest, it is not sign'd.
The paper is but air, the ink but water,
Without fulfilling of the written deed;
And thou dost juggle with me shamefully,
Saying thou lovest me, and for thy oath
Staking thy love, and leaving all undone
As thou hadst sworn by nothing. Thou art bound
To marry Catherine, which doing not,
Thou dost not love me,—thou art not a man.
*Huon.* I am indifferent to what I do.
All things of earth are now the same to me;
Good, bad, love, hate, wrong, kindness, life or death.
What hour you please, I'll marry Catherine. [*Going.*
*Countess.* Now! [*Stopping him.*
This very moment! She will meet thee in
The chapel, whither thou must straight repair.
Thou wilt?
*Huon.* I will.
*Countess.* The chaplain thou wilt find
Expecting thee—and, if he be not come
Already, still he will be sure to come,
Thou wilt not juggle with me?
*Huon.* No.
*Countess.* Thou darest not—
I mean, thou darest not but respect thine oath.
*Huon.* I'll keep it, madam.—Then, farewell for ever!
[*Aside.—Goes out.*
*Countess.* 'Tis done! [*Sinks into a chair.*

*Enter* Duke.

*Duke.* Where 's Huon?
*Countess.* Gone to do thy will.

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*Duke.* Who work'd this miracle? I never dream'd
He would conform to it! Who work'd it?
*Countess.* I.
*Duke.* Thou?
*Countess* [*giving him the paper*]. There.
*Duke.* My child! Thou art thy father's child,
My proud child still! Where is he?
*Countess.* In the chapel,
By this. The chaplain waits upon him there.
Catherine is in my room, expecting me.
So please you, sir, since I have help'd the match
Thus far, I'll e'en o'erlook the ceremony.
*Duke.* Do so.
My barque no more is fit for sea;
A ripple threatens it with foundering,
Almost 'tis founder'd now. Did Huon tell thee
How he withstood me?
*Countess.* All is known to me.
But pray you, for the sake of Catherine,
Grant him his freedom. 'Tis not meet her husband
Should drag the chain hath been unloosed from her.
*Duke.* This document accomplishes your wish,
E'en now prepared to win him to my purpose.
I give it freely, for I love the boy;
Ay, now entirely love him! See him married;
And may he plight a happy, happy troth
To her he weds! My child, I am failing fast.
'Tis time—don't heed!—go to the chapel—and
My blessing on the errand takes thee thither.

*Enter* Attendant.

Ha!—you are come in time, sir! I shall need
Your help to my chamber. Tell the boy, I bless him!
Come hither, bless thee, too! And bless the work
Thou goest to do! While I remember it,
Regard Count Ulrick as thy father's friend,
One of his household now, with sanction of
The Prince of Milan. I am very feeble!
'Must to my chamber!
*Countess* [*rushing towards him, and kneeling.*] Bless
me again! my father!

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*Duke.* Again, my child?—Again! [*Blessing her.*
Heaven bless thee! It is wiser—better knows
Thy good—can better help thee to 't—ay!
Better than thy father! May it bless thee, then,
And be its will, before thy father's, done! [*Goes out.*
*Countess.* Now, fail not Catherine, and the die is cast! [*Goes out.*

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## SCENE II.—*The Corridor of the Castle.*

*Enter* SIR CONRAD.

*Sir Con.* What calls the chaplain to his sacred post,
And why this privacy? About to pass
The porch, I was admonish'd 'twas forbid
To all to enter! 'Tis no day of fast,
No hour of customary rites! 'Tis nought
To me. I only wonder at its strangeness.
*Sir Rup.* [*entering.*] Where is the Prince of Milan?
*Sir Con.* In the court-yard—
Unless departed thence this moment.
*Sir Rup.* Find him,
And bring him to the chamber of the duke.
If on your way you meet the duke's physician,
In search of whom I go, he, too, is summon'd,
And tell him so.
*Sir Con.* Why, what 's the matter?
*Sir Rup.* Woe!
The duke!—the duke!—No question, but away!

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## SCENE III.—*Chamber of the* COUNTESS.

*Enter* CHRISTINA *and the* COUNTESS's Maid.

*Chris.* My mistress marry Huon?
*Maid.* Even so!
Now hand in hand with him before the priest;
Unless the knot be tied already—said
The blessing and amen.

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*Chris.* No bridemaid?
*Maid.* Yes,
My lady.
*Chris.* What! the Countess! bridemaid she
To Catherine that was before a serf!
Yet she was ever fond of Catherine.
*Maid.* You should have seen them both as forth they went,
Like two sweet sisters for the altar veil'd.
*Chris.* A sudden marriage this!
*Maid.* And lonely, too;
None but the principals admitted—friends
Nor attendants!
*Chris.* It is strange! Well. Huon gets
A wealthy wife—a freewoman, to boot;
And, sooth to say, a worthy husband, she—
Ay, were she better still—for many a prince
Looks not his rank so well as Huon would
Were he one. Softly—they return—yes.
*Maid.* No;
My mistress comes alone. How slow she moves!

*Enter the* Countess *faint, her* Maid *runs to support her.*

*Countess.* Help to untie me, girl. I cannot lift
My hand to my head—and I want air! Remove
My veil. There! Now I breathe!—A minute only
And all the world seems changed. Is this my room?
Art thou my waiting-maid?—Am I myself?
Where is my father?
*Maid.* In his chamber, lady.
He is complaining.
*Countess.* He is very old.
His life spun out into a very film.
I did not gainsay him! Thank Heaven for that!
I would that I could go to him, but 'faith
My limbs have done their best to bring me hither.
I am next to dead; almost dissolved to nothing.
Is that Christina? Girl, what do you here?
Home with all haste; your mistress there before you
Waits your assistance with most instant need.
*Chris.* It is all wonder.

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*Countess.* Art thou gone?
*Chris.* I am! [*Curtsies and goes out.*

COUNT ULRICK *enters.*

*Ulrick.* Madam!
*Countess.* Count Ulrick, is it you? I am glad
To see you, sir; my father told me, or
I dreamt it, he design'd to take you, sir,
Into his service. If 'tis so, I'm glad of it.
*Ulrick.* I grieve to think my office was a brief one!
*Countess.* Your office was a brief one!—Speak!—alas!
When silence is a substitute for speech
The heart must be o'er full of joy or pain!
Enough. I read your errand in your looks—
I am an orphan.
*Ulrick.* Madam, 'twas a debt
Long due to nature.
*Countess.* Still, sir, we must grieve
To see it paid. At what a time to leave me!
I cannot pay him half his dues of sorrow.
My heart is spent!—benumbed! this shaft of Fate
Lights on a corpse!—a corpse! Alas, my father!
[*A pause—Enter* Attendant, *hastily.*
*Atten.* Madam!
*Ulrick.* Keep silence! Do not interrupt
The sacred flow of sorrow for the dead.
*Countess.* No; let him speak; there's matter in his looks.
*Atten.* The banquet, as you ordered, is prepared,
But neither bride nor bridegroom can be found.
*Countess.* You mean the bride cannot be found!
*Atten.* Nor yet
The bridegroom.
*Countess.* Search for him, and you will find him—
Must find him! [Attendant *goes out.*
What a cross! at what a time!
When all my thoughts should be with him that 's gone!
My father! I did love my father, sir:
Indeed, I did!
*Ulrick.* Then let me now fulfil

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His last behest, whereof the substance this,
At length recorded here—which he enjoin'd
You should be instantly possess'd of—proof
Of his most fatherly regard and care.
Of those who seek your hand you must make choice
Of one to share the labours of the dukedom,
Or else abide the issue of the lists—
Your suitors summon'd to a tournament—
When he who rests the victor wins your hand.

*Countess.* I am content! I'll do my father's will,
And bide the issue of the tournament,
Or choose myself the man shall take my hand.

*Ulrick.* Jointly the Empress and myself are named
Executors, to give the will effect.

*Countess.* It was not needed. It had been respected
Without o'erlooking, how much less enforcement!
My brain and heart are here and there!—I haven't
The use of them. Some one did tell me now
Of something—what was it?

*Ulrick.* One said the serf—

*Countess.* Call him that name again! Whom speak'st thou of?
Huon?

*Atten.* [*entering*]. This letter is from Huon, madam.
Mounted upon a steed, your father's gift,
He threw it me, and fled.

*Countess* [*reading*]. "Eternally
Farewell—your will is done—I use my freedom.
Fortune my mistress hence—the richest boon
She can award me, death!—Once more farewell!"
O rashness most perverse and ruinous!
Let them pursue him; and provide them with
The fleetest of the stud, and gold beside,
For new relays. If they o'ertake him—if—
They must!—'tis an affair of life or death!
They must not quit him, but return with him—

*Atten.* The bride—

*Countess.* No heed of her. Bring Huon back
By fair means or by foul—persuasion lost,
Let them resort to force—but not to harm
A hair of his head. So be their numbers such



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As makes resistance idle. They are sure
To track him, so they lose not time—and see
They do not! If they waste a moment only,
They answer for't. Stay, sir! a purse of gold
To every one of them—of gold, you mark—
So that they bring him back; and one for you
In like event. A minute hence, observe,
I look into the court-yard, and expect
To see them in their saddles, and away!
Upon their lives I charge them bring him back!

[*They go out.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*The Garden of the Castle.*

*Enter* SIR RUPERT *and* SIR CONRAD.

*Sir Rup.* Time is the same. 'Tis our condition 's changed.
The hours hang weary-heavy on our hands:
We scarce could catch when Catherine was here,
They went so fleetly by us. Then the death
Of the duke hath left a blank, which, while he lived,
Light offices, with grateful tasks fill'd up,
Forbade our spirits flag.

*Sir Con.* Eventful day,
The day he died! Eventful day to us!
Our Catherine married Huon then, and fled;
And Huon fled, avoiding Catherine;
Nor since of either tidings—though for him
Almost the world was search'd. Strange, loathing him
As she did, with hate almost unnatural,
How much to heart the Countess took his flight.

*Sir Rup.* Ay, as a gentle stream would take a rock,
Suppose one suddenly cast into it,
Damming its channel up, and making foam,
Where all before went crystal, without ripple,
But such as noteth gliding. Yes, 'twas strange.

*Sir Con.* 'Twas very strange.

*Sir Rup.* 'Twas one of certain things

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We see, yet question that we see, yet there
We know they are.
*Sir Con.* She pines for loss of him.
*Sir Rup.* No, sir; she takes to heart her father's will,
Compelling her to choose a husband, or
Accept of him the tournament may send her.
And so, she keeps alone; to all forbidding
Approach to her, except this youth, who sits
In Huon's place, her secretary now,
The forward cousin of fair Catherine.
*Sir Con.* Strange, Catherine should fly, and Huon too!
That each should purpose, what, if known to each,
Had one accomplish'd, had sufficed for both,
To shun the consummation of the rites!
Strange, that the Duke that very day should die!
*Sir Rup.* Untimely was the Duke's decease for us—
Prevented by his death from profiting
By the fair opening which the turbulent
And wild Bohemians for our lances made.
We could not take the field; and, lo, the war,
Ere well commenced, is done; concluded too
By single combat, and the conqueror
A knight unknown till now, whose championship
Had graced the proudest days of chivalry:
Of presence noble as his deeds are lofty,
By that confirming what by these he won—
The favour of the Empress. Yonder comes
The secretary.
*Sir Con.* Ay, 'tis he.
*Sir Rup.* I fear
He laughs at us to give us hopes, as still
You know he does, that one of us shall yet
Make wife of Catherine. A forward spark!
I hate a stripling that 's so much the man;
It shows like aping. He grows worse and worse,
Since he hath got his office. For the sake
Of Catherine, alone, I bear with him.
*Sir Con.* He is like her; never brother more like sister.
I have a word to say to you anon,
Touching to-morrow, when the tournament



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Decides who weds the Countess, she declining
To choose a mate herself.
*Cath.* [*without, very loud*]. Ho! Holloa!
*Sir Rup.* Ho! [CATHERINE *enters.*
Why call you, sir, so loud?
*Cath.* To make you hear
News, sirs, from Catherine! Shall I whisper it?
She is coming!
*Sir Rup.* So you told us months ago.
*Cath.* Well, when she comes she'll be the welcomer!
*Sir Con.* I'll wait for her no longer.
*Cath.* Wait for her?
O! ay! a man may wait, and wait in vain.
I wait for a wife; though the odds are ten to one;
As I'm a man, I'll die a bachelor.
Do you know the signs of one?
*Sir Con.* No; what are they?
*Cath.* O, various; but the chief, a cautious eye,
And calculating. He that scans a fence,
Doth seldom make a clever leap of it;
Nine times in ten he balks his spring and falls,
In the ditch; while he who takes it at a glance,
Goes flying over. Women are shrewd imps!
Behoves a man he thinks not of their pockets,
When he is looking in their faces; for,
Wear he his eye ever so languishingly,
They'll find he's only working at a sum
In arithmetic. Sir Rupert, let me see
Your face! Don't look so sullen at me. Who
Can see the sun if he's behind a cloud?
That 's right. I would not say, but when the woman
Kind heaven intends for wife to you shall come,
You'll marry her.
*Sir Con.* What say you of my face?
*Cath.* The same I say of his. By my honour, sirs!
Though I may pass for an astrologer,
I never yet, believe me, made pretence
To read the stars; nor am I adept yet
In palmistry; nor have I studied signs
As lucky or unlucky omens; yet
Things can I tell before they come to pass.

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*Sir Con.* But shall I die a bachelor?
*Cath.* You will,
Unless it chance, upon a certain day,
In a certain month, in such or such a year—
At present which is doubtful, but as sure
As time doth run 'twill come—you get a wife!
Now, there's a puzzle for you; make it out,
And tell it me; and then I'll tell it you,
If you are in the right. Your lot is cast
In mystery; but, for Sir Rupert, his
Is plain; 'tis right before me: I can tell
The year, the month, the week, the day, almost
The very hour, he will be married, or—
Not married! yet am I no conjuror.
Where is Sir Otto?
*Sir Con.* We are going to his house;
He waits for us.
*Cath.* I'll follow. News wait I
From Catherine; I'll bring it, if it comes.
Nay, sirs, beseech you, look not thus upon me
With eyes of marvel. On my word! indeed,
And, by my honour,—and, if nothing else
Will satisfy you, though I have ta'en an oath
'Gainst swearing, I will give it on my oath—
I am no conjuror! Another word:
What I have told you, tell not, as you love me,
Lest I should pay for it by flood or faggot!
Upon my life, sirs, I am no conjuror!
[*They go out severally.*

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## SCENE II.—*A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter* ULRICK.

*Ulrick.* At length—the day almost arrived that brings
The tournament, whose issue brings to her
A consort for her state—she yields me audience.
Is it for loss of Huon she has pined,
And kept herself forbiddingly alone?
If so, why give his hand to Catherine?
This is a mystery, the which the more

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I try to sound, the deeper doth it grow;
While surmise after surmise rises, as
Report succeeds report of high exploits
Achieved by this unknown adventurer,
Who now stands next the Empress chief in place,
That even he and Huon are the same!
Should it be so, and he should come along,
What then the issue of her meeting with him?
This I revolve, and with a troubled heart,
That sees no end to its perplexity. [*Looks off.*
How changed she is! Her fiery eye is quench'd!
Her head its haughty carriage hath abated,
Her cheek is beggar'd of its prideful flush.

*Enter* COUNTESS [*a parchment in her hand*].

*Countess.* I have perused the testament, my lord,
Carefully, word for word, and see no mention,
Either directly or by implication,
Touching the quality of him may win me.

*Ulrick.* No, none is made; a slight omission only.

*Countess.* Yet space enough to let my will creep through.
You say, my lord, you have made proclamation
Of this fair passage far and wide?

*Ulrick.* I have.

*Countess.* And now expect the Empress?

*Ulrick.* Yes.

*Countess.* And with her?

*Ulrick.* The noblest of her court; a glorious crowd;
Among the rest, her favourite; that youth
With whose exploits the wondering realm resounds,
Who, in so brief a space, without a name,
Has made himself the noblest which the tongue
Of high renown rings out.

*Countess.* That youth! what youth?

*Ulrick.* A young adventurer, of whom it seems
Fair fortune is enamour'd—gives him all
He asks!

*Countess.* I never heard of him before.

*Ulrick.* So please you, madam, you forget till now,
Since that your father died and Huon fled,

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Save your new secretary, you have deign'd
With none vouchsafe communing.
*Countess.* You are right.
I have forgot the world, time, everything!
What is this favourite called?
*Ulrick.* His titles change
So fast—the former almost new as its
Successor—scarce I know now his present style.
*Countess.* His name I mean.
*Ulrick.* His name I know not, madam.
*Countess.* What moves my heart, so leaden-dull before?
Why did it leap at mention of the stranger? [*Aside.*
Has he been seen by any whom we know,
Any of our vassals, chiefs, or friends?
*Ulrick.* I have met
With none of these have seen him.
*Countess* [*abstractedly*]. Happy woman!
*Ulrick.* Madam?
*Countess.* The Empress is a happy woman.
She can reward desert, ennoble it.
*Ulrick.* So in this instance hath her highness done
With such profusion of munificence,
There are not wanting those who think she sees
Less with an empress' than a woman's eyes,
And means her bounties but as costly heralds,
Poor to the costlier comer they forerun.
*Countess.* What! means she to espouse him?
*Ulrick.* 'Tis surmised.
Matter to wonder at, yet justified.
For they report him of a presence noble,
As e'er bespoke a man to challenge honour.
*Countess.* I never dreamt of an abyss so hideous—
And to be standing on the very brink on't!
*Ulrick* [*alarmed at her vehemence*]. Madam!
*Countess.* Ay! what's the matter? [*Aside.*] I am
frighten'd
At myself! [*Aloud.*] My lord, my spirits are so dreamy,
Things which are not, I see—which are, see not!
Pray do not heed me. For this tournament,
Thus near without obstruction on my part
Hath it approached, but pray you keep in mind

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On what condition; that at any time
The husband it awards, revolting to me,
I am at liberty to make a choice
Between a husband and the cloister. So!
I'll read the will again. [*Sits down and reads.*

*Stephen* [*entering hastily*]. News! news! my lord.

*Ulrick.* What is it?

*Stephen.* Huon!

*Countess.* Ha!

Well, what of Huon, is he found?

*Stephen.* He is.

*Countess.* Propitious Heaven, at what a time! where is he?

*Stephen.* In the suite of the Empress.

*Countess.* Well,—go on!

*Stephen.* I saw him! More. That sun of chivalry
Hath suddenly blazed forth in the brief war
So late gone by and dazzled friends and foes—
The fav'rite of the Empress—

*Countess.* Well? Go on!

*Stephen.* —Huon and he are one.

*Countess.* I was sure of it!
Send him away.

[*She staggers to a seat,* ULRICK *supports her.*

*Ulrick.* Hence, sir. [STEPHEN *goes out.*

*Countess.* Don't wonder at me! Don't!
Nor question me, whate'er I say or do!
Listen and do my bidding. I prepare
To give reception to the Empress,—thou
See Huon. Tell him I would speak with him
Soon as occasion serves; or let him make
Occasion, and at once—at once, my lord!
[*Aside.*] Where shall we meet? In the garden? No; the garden
Is overlook'd. In the library? No;
We may be subject to intrusion there.
What should prevent his coming to my closet?
What place so fit? Why think of any other?
[*Aloud.*] My lord, bring Huon to my closet. Huon!
The favourite of the Empress I should say.

[*The* COUNTESS *and* ULRICK *go out severally.*

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## SCENE III.—Sir Otto's *House.*

*Enter* Sir Otto, Sir Conrad, *and* Sir Rupert.

*Sir Otto.* 'Tis slight of fortune not to take the chance
She proffers; since the lists must open, sirs,
To every lance, why not adventure ours,
With such a prize? Wait you for Catherine.
I'm for the tournament.
*Sir Con.* And so am I.
This secretary is a subtle spark.
He has harp'd upon our suit to Catherine,
Awaken'd hopes we had given o'er as dead,
And pledged himself with oaths she would return
Free, as she ne'er had plighted troth to Huon,
And yet she comes not. What we take in earnest,
Be sure he only gives in mockery.
*Sir Otto.* I'm of your counsel, and will break a lance
To-morrow for the Countess.
*Sir Rup.* Do so, sir.
I break no lance except for Catherine.
*Catherine* [*entering disguised as a man*]. Who talks
of breaking lances?
*Sir Otto.* Ha! our friend
The Secretary.
*Sir Con.* Well sir, what's your news?
Where's Catherine?
*Cath.* Absorb'd in solving, sir,
A knotty point.
*Sir Con.* A knotty point; what is't?
*Cath.* The measure of a lover's patience, Sir.
*Sir Otto.* Does she not come?
*Cath.* Not till that point is solved.
Now, could you solve it for her, she might come
The sooner.
*Sir Otto.* 'Tis an hour.
*Sir Con.* A day.
*Sir Otto.* A week.
*Sir Con.* A month.
*Sir Otto.* A year.
*Cath.* [*to* Sir Rupert]. Will you not make a guess?



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*Sir Rup.* [*sighing*]. It is a life!
*Cath.* Can't you go further, sir?
Try if you can. Lovers do miracles:
'Tis said they do, I never saw them though,
Nor met with those that did.
*Sir Otto.* Where is our mistress?
*Cath.* Here,
Where'er she is; or nowhere, where you are.
Have you a mistress, there your mistress is,
Were she at one end of the world and you
At the other.
*Sir Rup.* Ay, were she in another world!
*Cath.* Why what's the matter with Sir Rupert? Is
The gentleman gone mad? I think myself
A sterling lover, but I take no oath,
Except to flesh and blood. Sir Rupert, what's
Your thought of a mistress?
*Sir Rup.* A vitality
Precious, peculiar, not to be supplied;
Once with your being join'd, a part of it
For ever!
*Cath.* Humph! and you believe, Sir Rupert,
You have met with such a thing?
*Sir Rup.* I have.
*Cath.* And where?
*Sir Rup.* In Catherine.
*Cath.* Heaven help the man, he speaks
As if he thought himself in earnest, sirs.
Whom said he now he'd break a lance for?
*Sir Con. and Sir Otto.* Her.
*Cath.* For Catherine, poor man! far better break
A lance for the Countess; as the lists, they say,
Are open to all challengers that bear
The rank of knighthood.
*Sir Otto.* So they are, and we
Design to try our fortune, and lament
Not to find Sir Rupert of our mind.
*Cath.* That mortifies you, does it? So, Sir Rupert,
Will you make suit again to Catherine,
Say she comes back again, released from her
Enforced vow?

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*Sir Rup.* Will I make suit to her?
My heart is ever lying at her feet.
*Cath.* 'Tis neighbour then, to an ungainly shoe.
She has broken her ancle, and the awkward leech
Who set it for her made a botch of it.
Her foot's awry; she limps; her taper waist,
So straight before when she moved, goes zig-zag now.
Give your heart joy, sir, of its pleasant seat.
*Sir Rup.* The gait and shape of gentle Catherine
Are in her heart, no fracture warping there.
*Sir Otto.* With what a serious face you play the cheat.
*Catherine.* Sir, I look serious at a serious thing.
*Sir Con.* It is not as you say?
*Cath.* Believe 'tis not;
But take this with you, I should be more grieved
Than you would, to disparage Catherine.
*Sir Otto.* So Catherine doth halt?
*Sir Con.* My love doth halt.
*Sir Otto.* And so doth mine.
*Cath.* I have not told him all.
*Sir Otto.* What, is there more to come?
*Cath.* Listen—you'll hear.
So sir, you make retainers of your eyes, [*To* SIR RUP.
Nor feast at the same table, but eschew
Their homely fare, though men as noble deem
A well-turn'd leg a dainty, let that pass;
But give not me a mistress with a fair
Transparent skin, that you can see beneath
Tracery costlier than veins of gold
Suppose they lay in bed of alabaster;
It never stands the weather.
*Sir Otto.* Is she changed
In her complexion?
*Cath.* Do not urge me, sir,
To speak more than I do speak, speaking that
With pain.
*Sir Con.* What! has she turn'd from ivory to—
*Cath.* Anything you please.
*Sir Con.* Mahogany?
*Cath.* You say it for me, I'm beholden to you;
'Tis hard to speak unwelcome things of friends.

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*Sir Otto.* And hard to hear them too. Sir Rupert.
*Sir Rup.* Well.
*Sir Otto.* Hear ye?
*Sir Rup.* I do.
*Sir Otto.* And what resolve you?
*Sir Rup.* What
I did resolve before—to break no lance
Except for Catherine. Her maiden thoughts—
Test to the daintiest conceit of love—
And generous affections, might unveil
Themselves to modesty without its blush,
Are Catherine's complexion! [*Retires.*
*Cath.* He is mad!
Isn't he, sir? Have twenty masses said,
That you preserve your wits! seeing the thing
That turn'd his brain for him, you all affect.
Think you 'twill bring him to his senses, sirs,
To tell him she hath squandered all her wealth?
*Sir Otto.* Better she halted in her gait than that!
*Sir Con.* Or cast her white skin for an Ethiop's!
You do not tell us so?
*Cath.* I'll tell it him.
*Sir Otto.* But is it so?
She was a prudent girl
Before she went.
*Cath.* Man, sir, is but a plant,
Although he holds no rank in botany;
And as with change of climate plants will change,
Thrive more or less, or take no root at all,
So man discovers strange diversity
Transferr'd to sun and soil not native to him.
*Sir Otto.* But are her riches dwindled?
*Sir Con.* Has she shrunk,
Indeed, from affluence to poverty?
*Cath.* Sirs, you shall judge from one particular.
From morn till night she is in masquerade.
You wouldn't know her, though you look'd upon her,
Walk'd with her, talk'd with her. Can this be done
At light expense? Moreover, sirs, she keeps
Bad company; nor that of her own sex;
Two arrant knaves especially, that stick

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Like leeches to her, and will ne'er fall off
Long as she suffers them, while there's a drop
To gorge.
*Sir Otto.* She is ruin'd utterly.
*Sir Con.* Undone,
Beyond redemption. Look, Sir Rupert.
*Sir Rup.* Well?
*Sir Con.* Catherine's for hire; she must take service!
All
Her wealth is gone.
*Sir Rup.* [*cheerfully*]. Is gone?
*Sir Con.* It makes you glad!
*Sir Rup.* Now could I woo her with the best of ye.
Her match in fortune, I could praise her now
Dreading no charge of venal flattery.
Fair sir, take pity on an honest heart
And loving one, and as you know the haunt
This gentle fawn hath slunk to, tell it me
That I may straight o'ertake and make her mine.
*Sir Otto.* Better you wait to-morrow's tournament,
As we shall.
*Cath.* Gentlemen, you do not know
Your man! Tell me a linsey-woolsey maid,
With halting gait, and saffron-colour'd skin,
And not a doit to make a market with them,
Could for a moment in comparison
Stand with the Countess! who could credit it?
The simple truth is this, your friend lacks mettle.
*Sir Rup.* Sir!
*Cath.* He can bluster, that is evident.
See what a giant,—he would eat me up
If he could: but think you, sirs, I heed his club?
Give me a straw, I'll face him. You mistake
Your friend! his frame's robust enough, but, 'faith,
His spirit is a lean one.
*Sir Rup.* 'Sdeath, sir!
*Cath.* Ho!
If you have sworn men into agues, sir,
Don't try your skill on me. My parrot swears
As well as you, and just as much I heed him.

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*Sir Rup.* [*drawing*]. It passeth all endurance—
pshaw, a stripling!
*Cath.* A stripling, sir, to make an oak afeard.
*Sir Rup.* [*again drawing*]. Indeed!
*Cath.* As I do live his sword is out!
But he's a spaniel, as I 'll prove to you,
Who thinks he bites by showing you his teeth.
Here's for you, sir—[*draws*]— but hold, what day is this?
*Sir Con.* Friday.
*Cath.* I never fight on Fridays, sirs.
My killing days are all the rest of the week,
E'en Sundays not excepted. Sirs, your friend
Is a coward. [*Coolly puts up her sword.*
*Sir Rup.* Furies!
*Cath.* Fiends and all sorts of imps!
Swearing won't save you, sir. I'll prove my words.
I dare you, at the tournament to-morrow,
To break a lance with me. Observe you, sirs,
He shakes from head to foot at the thought of it,
Though now he pass it off with swaggerings.
He dares as soon confront stout Charlemagne,
Were he alive, as me. I'll wager you
My sword to your dagger, he takes flight to-day,
And waits not for to-morrow.
*Sir Rup.* Will I not!
I will have satisfaction. I accept
His challenge. I will have satisfaction, sirs.
*Cath.* You shall, and have it to your heart's content.
Take linsey-woolsey with a halt, and the skin
Of a negro, rather than essay a tilt
With chance to win a Countess! I could laugh
To scorn the man that would believe him. Oh!
He shall have satisfaction. I could beat him
With a rush in rest. He shall have satisfaction!
Sirs, he will cower at very sight of me;
Fall on his knees, and beg his life of me
With clasp'd hands. He shall have satisfaction!
[*They go out severally.*

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## SCENE IV.—*A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter* COUNTESS.

*Count.* It is confirm'd—the place he holds beside her
Her every action speaks. Of all her court
He is the only one, whose duties to her
She takes as favours, not as things of course.
He comes! Who stops him thus untimely? Oh,
How chang'd he is!—The fiery hardihood
Of the life he hath of late made consort of,
Hath given another spirit to his eyes.
His face is cast anew, as circumstance
Could alter Nature's modelling and work,
Improving on her mould. Is that the man
Was once my father's serf, and I did scorn?
Fell ever at my wayward frown that brow?
Or stoop'd that knee, for me, to kiss the ground?
Would they do it now? Fell ever at my feet
That form, as prostrate as the hand of death
Had struck it to the floor? 'Twould take that hand
To lay it now there—and a wave of mine
Had done it once! If he confesses hold
Of any other, never shall he learn
His hold of me! but, if he strives in love,
I bless my stars I have the 'vantage ground.

[HUON *enters, and remains standing at a distance, with his eyes on the ground*].

*Countess.* Is Huon here, and does not Huon speak?
[*Pauses.*
Absent so long, no greeting for a friend— [*Pauses.*
A woman, too! [*Pauses*]—no salutation kind,
Prelude of happy news she'd joy to hear,—
Relation of adventures she would thrill
To listen to,—exploits she would wonder at
And the next moment at her wonder blush,
Knowing whose arm achieved them!

*Huon.* I am glad
To find you well.

*Countess.* You are glad to find me well?

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I hope you are ! It were not saying much,
I trust, to say I know you are ! You are glad
To find me well ! Is that your news.
If 'tis, it is strange news.
*Huon.* You wish'd to see me,
And I am here to learn your will.
*Countess.* More news !
You are a friend worth parting with, you bring
Such marvels home with you. Sometime methinks
Since last we met together, and you are glad
To find me well ; and, as I wished to see you,
You are here to learn my will ! You were not here
Had not I sent for you.
*Huon.* It would have been
Presumptuous.
*Countess.* Presumptuous !
*Huon.* Yes, madam,
In the serf.
*Countess* [*with sudden indignation*]. No, sir, not in the favourite
Of the Empress !—Huon, this is not the way
We ought to meet ! It should not be in anger.
You are come home, and you are welcome home.
Requires my tongue a backer to get credence ?
Well ! there 's my hand beside. Do you not take
My hand ?
*Huon.* You are a noble lady, madam,
Whose father was my lord, by leave of whom
I thought and had a will—did what I did—
Yea, kept the very blood within my veins.
Behoves it I should take his daughter's hand ?
*Countess.* You mock me.
*Huon.* Would I did, and 'twere a dream !
But dreams are not repeated day by day,
And day by day reminds me of a time
I was your father's serf.
*Countess.* No more of this.
*Huon.* Oh ! would no more ! The wounded body heals,
The pain is over, all is sound again,
A scar reminds you of it—nothing more !
Not so the heart, you lacerate it once !

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Habit may dull, pursuit engross—divert—
But never are you ransomed from the throe.
Live your meridian out it comes again,
Fresh as at first, to make you writhe anew.
*Countess.* We do not meet to talk of grievances,
Huon. I offer'd you my hand just now.
Why do you weep? I did not give it you
To kiss it with your tears!
*Huon.* O, 'tis a hand
Thou hast forbidden mine to meet.
*Countess.* No, Huon,
Not as friends!—[*recovering herself*]—I'll see him clearly first— [*Aside.*
Sit down and let us talk. I have fifty things
I want to say to you, yet know not which
To begin with. Huon, do you like the Empress?
*Huon.* Like her?
*Countess.* Yes; like her,—that's the word I said.
Perhaps it should be "love her"?
*Huon.* Love her, madam!—
*Countess* [*interrupting him*]. I see you do! Go on? What were you going
To say?
*Huon.* O contrast marvellous! beyond
Belief of nature!
*Countess.* Ay! 'twixt her and me!
Go on! The contrast? Best we understand
Each other! Well? The contrast?
*Huon.* 'Twere as one
Should find the sun by following the night!
Should plunge into her regions, and for chill,
And gloom, and sterileness, find light, and warmth,
And verdure,—such as should belong to day!
'Twere as death owned a heart, and life had none
But with the shows of animation
Did lodge within its breast a core of stone,
While the still ribs of death had pulse within them!
*Countess.* Am I that day, that life, compared to which
Death, night, are e'en so rich? Is she thou servest
That death, that night, preferr'd to life and day?
*Huon.* O, I did love thee to oblivion

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Of myself! What Nature gave me to assert
The man neglecting, as despised things
Compared to thee! That she intended me
For deeds of nobleness I may confess,
Seeing that others own I have achieved them.
Yet I abused her bounties,—and, for what?
Scorns—wrongs—through love of thee preferr'd them!
And which I bore, until the cause itself,
That made me bear them, thou didst make a means
Of yet unknown oppression. *That* I bore!
But there did patience cease. Yes! not, until
Coerced there, where, spared, I were content
To last the thrall of passion's lethargy,
Did I rebel! But when I was struck down
Prostrate, as, for the sake of flesh and blood,
Behoves not slaves to lie,—with marvel on't
I waked to sense of what I ought to be!
Of what, against my will, 'twas past the sport
Of power to change me from! A MAN!—and straight
A man I started up! a man, resolved
To use his attributes as fits a man
To vindicate the ancient, common birth-right,
And answer the design of Him that framed him!

*Countess.* So! you have register'd your debts to me,
No item overlook'd thou knowest of.
What, now, if I could name to thee one debt
Would blot out all the rest?—not known to thee,
A debt thy dreams did never give thee glimpse of,—
Thy dreams where thou didst soar, didst cast away
The clog, last morn put on, and mount as high
As e'er ambition left at large could wing,
Daring the eagle to come up to thee!

*Huon.* No debt that thou couldst name were again to me.
I keep no register of aught between us.
Or, if I do, I never turn to it,
Unless enforced, as now. Whate'er has pass'd,
Is pass'd, and, profitless to memory,
Were better be forgotten.

*Countess.* Ay? Indeed!
So easily done? Well, be it so! 'Tis past,
And so should be forgotten. Please you, now

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Turn to the Empress. You have painted me;
Proceed to her. Come, let me see what hand
You will make of her picture. When I ask'd you now
If you liked her, you did echo me!—and then
I ask'd you if you loved her, and again
You echo'd me! I want an answer, not
An echo. Well, sir? well?

*Huon.* Madam, I love
And honour her.

[*She starts from her seat; he rises also.*

*Countess.* Thou art rewarded, pride!
Meet'st thy deserts! Show thy high breeding now!
Tread stately! throw thy spurning glances round!
And talk as mighty things as though the earth
Were made for thee alone! Where 's thy domain?
Gone! And thy palace, what is it? a ruin!
And what art thou thyself? a beggar now!
Huon, you loved me once! [*Bursting into tears.*

*Huon.* I loved thee once!
Oh, tell me, when was it I loved thee not?
Was 't in my childhood, boyhood, manhood? Oh!
In all of them I loved thee! And were I now
To live the span of my first life, twice told,
And then to wither, thou surviving me,
And yet I lived in thy sweet memory,
Then might'st thou say of me, "He loved me once;
But that was all his life!"

*Countess.* 'Twas heart for heart!
I loved thee ever! Yes! the passion now
Thrills on the woman's tongue; the girl's had told thee,
Had I been bold as fond; for even then
I saw thy worth, but did not see thy station,
Till others, not so well affected towards thee,
Reveal'd it to me by their cold regards.
I could not help my nature. From that time
Two passions strove in my divided soul
For mastery—scorn of thy station, love
For thee—each feeding on the other's hate,
And growing stronger; till I thought their strife
Would shake my frame to dissolution! Yes!

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Oh, Huon! when my brow sat cloudy oft
O'er my cold eye, that look'd askant at thee,
Thou little thought what friend there was within
Would make that brow clear as a summer sky,
That eye bright, glowing as a summer's sun,
To kindle thee—as they, their world, with life,
And health, and wealth, and gladness!
*Huon.* Say'st thou this
To me? or do I dream I hear thee say it?
Or is the past a dream? I did not yield
At thy command, to marry Catherine?
Thou didst not see me wed her? Fancy forged
The ring I thought I put upon her finger?
Thou wast not by at all? From first to last,
Hadst not a hand in it? or, if thou hadst,
Why then untimely this unfold to me?
For I do know thee to be pride of all
Proud honour's children! Art thou offspring prime
Of cruelty as well? O, Heaven, to think
She loved me, and could give me to another,
Nor yet to her alone!—another!—
*Countess.* Ha! Well?
*Huon.* —One who ne'er set eyes on me until
An outcast, by her deed of hate who loved me!
To one, a stranger, saw me seeking fortune,
And gave the hand to me could help me to her!
Lavish'd her favours on me!—lit me up
With honours, till beside the bright themselves
I lost no brightness!
*Countess.* To the Empress?
*Huon.* Yes!
Thou lovest me?—O, fate! There was a time,
'Twere more than bliss, if more could be, to know it;
But now 'tis misery!
*Countess.* 'Tis misery!
[COUNTESS *starts up again*, HUON *also rising.*
Art thou in such a strait indeed as that,
To give my love for thee so harsh a name?
What shall I call it then? Coin me a name
Will stand for something worse than misery—
Will paint the case of a high, noble maid,

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Who stoop'd to love a serf; nay, stopp'd not there,
But told her passion to him—Misery!
*Huon.* I am no more a serf.
*Countess.* Thou art ennobled;
Yet art thou still the same; thou hast won honours,
Rewards of deeds, in spite of thy base blood
Achieved by thee!
*Huon.* Nay, madam, spare my blood,
And pardon me, its owner, if I say
It is not base.
*Countess.* It is! what should it be
But base? A serf did give it thee, a serf
Gave him his blood! Trace back the current, sir,
Far as you can, and you will find it base,
Nothing but base.
*Huon.* Madam, men's natures are
Their blood; they have no other—high or low.
If base the current hitherto of mine,
It ceased with me. Born in thy father's house
A serf, I left it one, to seek my fortune,
Make it or mar it, for promotion having
No other patron than my own right arm,
And my own heart and head to guide and nerve it;
And with their help, I see that house again,
An independent, self-exalted man,
While many a son, who left a noble home
With blood untainted for a thousand years,
Returns to it no better than he left it.
Is my blood base?
*Countess.* No, Huon! mine was base
To let me call it so. Alas! alas!
And hast no better welcome for my love
Than that sad word thou spok'st?
*Huon.* What word so fit?
What is it to a man condemn'd to die,
To tell him of a treasure left to him?
Shall he be glad and thank his lucky stars,
Or shall not that, their bounty, aggravate
The ruin, makes it vain!
*Countess.* Condemn'd to die?
Resemblest thou a man condemn'd to die?

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*Huon.* Why didst thou drive me from thee by that act?

*Countess.* That act was nothing; 'twas thy flight,
And that which follow'd it. Thou art entangled—
And thank thy flight. Oh! Huon, were thy love
In daring enterprise the tithe of mine,
'Twould attempt something to enlarge thee from
The cause thou art prisoner to!

*Huon.* It cannot cease,
Except with life.

*Countess.* The Empress loves thee, Huon!

*Huon.* No.

*Countess.* But she does.
Thou art her favourite. She
Hath chained thee to her throne.

*Huon.* No.

*Countess.* But she has!
Thou hast made merchandise,
Most shameful, merchandise, of thy allegiance!
Broken oaths as tiny shells which at a touch
Do fall to powder!

*Huon.* Broken oaths!

*Countess.* Yes, oaths!
Thy life was all one oath of love to me!
Sworn to me daily, hourly, by thine eyes,
Which, when they saw me, lighten'd up as though
An angel's presence did enhance their sense,
That I have seen their very colour change,
Subliming into lines past earthliness.
Talk of the adjuration of the tongue—
Compare love's name, a sound which any lip
May pipe! a breath! with holy love itself!
Thou 'rt not forsworn, because thou took'st no oath?
What were thy accents then? thy accents, Huon?
O! they did turn thy lightest words to oaths,
Vouching the burden of a love-fraught soul!
Telling a tale which my young nature caught
With interest so deep, was conn'd by heart
Before I knew the fatal argument!
Huon, I charge thee quit the service of the Empress!

*Huon.* 'Twere against all honour.

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*Countess.* No!
Give up her service!
*Huon.* 'Twere ingratitude.
*Countess.* Ingratitude, for what!
*Huon.* She has advanced me
Past my deserts.
*Countess.* No, I deny it! No!
Not equal to them! No! Thy golden deeds
She has repaid with tinsel!
*Ulrick* [*entering*]. Please you, sir,
The Empress summons you.
*Countess.* You are not going?
*Huon.* My presence is commanded.
*Countess.* Are you going?
*Ulrick.* My lord!
*Huon.* I come.
*Countess.* You are going, then?
*Huon.* I must go.
*Countess.* You must? Then go! Go, and farewell for ever! [*They go out.*

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## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*The Hall of the Castle.*

*The* EMPRESS, Courtiers, Knights, Heralds, &c. *prepared to proceed to the Tournament.*

*Enter* ULRICK.

*Emp.* [*to* ULRICK]. WHY wait we for the Countess? What delays her?
This day is dedicate to her; for her
We are convened; and comes she last of all?
*Ulrick.* Madam, she craves your favour for this pause.
Believe 'tis not remissness, but mischance,
Retards her. Doubtless, she will come, anon.
*Emp.* Anon, my lord! Anon is not our time
For friends to greet us, when they summon us.

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*Enter three* Attendants, *the first bearing a coronet on a cushion, the second a pile of parchments, the third followed by* Vassals, *carrying money-coffers; last of all, the* Countess, *plainly attired, followed by her* Women, *in costly dresses. She stops before the* Empress.

*Emp.* Why, lady! what is this?

*Countess.* My liege, receive
This emblem of that pomp which I resign,
Because 'tis adjunct to conditions, such
As render it a burden to me, past
The faculty of sufferance to bear.

*Emp.* Lady!

*Countess.* So please you, madam, give me leave.
As joint executor with this worthy lord,
Into your hands I also yield all right
And title to this fair chateau, besides
The lands and forests, its appendages,
As well as vassals, natives of the soil.

*Emp.* But, lady—

*Countess.* Madam, suffer me conclude.
These are the coffers which my father left,
And as he left them render'd to your highness;
And with them all resign'd, save such endowment
As shall entitle me to that retreat
Holy and calm, wherein I mean to pass,
I'll say, the remnant of my days, i' th' hope,
Though few are past, still fewer are to come.
Which option, as you know, my father's will
Has left to me.

*Emp.* Then will you not abide
The cast of fate in the tournament? nor take
The husband she may send—nor yet select
Yourself?

*Countess.* I cannot, madam.

*Emp.* How?

*Countess.* I am
Forestall'd.

*Emp.* by whom?

*Countess.* By you!

*Emp.* Let every one

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Repair to the tournament. Let it proceed,
As we ourself were there. And you, my lord,
[*To* ULRICK.
Preside for us. It is our will the lists
Be open'd straight. The Countess stays with me.
[*All go out, except the* EMPRESS *and* COUNTESS.
We are alone! Now, how am I a let
To such espousals as your choice would make?
*Countess.* Do you not know?
*Emp.* Girl, be direct with me,
Nor in the headlong passion of your soul,
That seems to joy in strife and wrack, forget
'Tis your liege lady that vouchsafes you audience.
*Countess.* That I forget, and everything beside,
Except one thing, in still revolving which
The earth hath shrunk in estimation
Into a grain—the sun into a spark!
Nought hath kept substance but my desolation,
Which seems to me to fill up space itself
Till nothing else hath room.
*Emp.* Thy desolation? Who made it for thee?
*Countess.* Thou!
*Emp.* In what regard?
*Countess.* In thy attractive favour shown to Huon!
*Emp.* I made thy desolation? Thou thyself
Didst make it with thy pride, the greater, but
Worse portion of thee!
*Countess.* By my pride?
*Emp.* Thy pride,
Which, evil counsellor to thy love, advised it
To blush with shame at homage from the which
It could not yet refrain, because 'twas due—
Tribute to such desert, as far behind
Left all desert beside, and might have worn
The subject's heart—whose mistress's it won!—
Thy story—everything are known to me.
*Countess.* Then thou confessest it!
*Emp.* What?
*Countess.* What?
*Emp.* Beware!
I brook not such a tone from thee.



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*Countess.* The heart
Will speak, despite the checks of shows and forms,
Shadows compared to its realities!
Is it not so with thee?—e'er hast thou felt
A pang?—and if thou hast, where, then, thy palace?
Thy retinue?—thy guards?—thy empire?—Gone
With all their proud appurtenances, and
No habitation left thee but thy breast,
The only house of happiness or woe!
How shall it be with me, then, with a heart
Madden'd with torture? Shall I cast about
To furnish looks, and words, and tones for things,
I have no interest in, and thou, that hast,
In equal case wouldst give to disregard?
*Emp.* Remember thou 'rt a subject!
*Countess.* So I will
While thou 'rt the empress; but when thou becomest
A woman—a mere woman like myself—
Stepp'st from the eminence that lifts thee 'bove me—
Level'st thee to me in one common nature—
I deal with thee as woman deals with woman!
I own thy power! I must, and do! Thy breath
Can doom me exile, bondage, what it will!
There I submit! Thou art the empress there.
But when thou thwart'st me in the interests
Which are the right not more of one than all—
Trenchest upon my private peace—my love—
Thou dost me wrong for which I challenge thee
As equal may an equal.
*Emp.* Come! Thy challenge?
What dost allege against me?
*Countess.* Thou dost love him!
*Emp.* Ay, by my troth, as much as thou didst scorn him!
*Countess.* He did accuse me to thee?
*Emp.* Wayward woman,
He never spoke of thee, except with love.
*Countess.* How couldst thou love him then? How could thy greatness
Forget itself to try and steal a heart,
Thou knew'st to be another's?

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*Emp.* Steal!
*Countess.* Ay, steal!
Must we coin terms for those that are above us,
To make offences gracious to their ears,
When they commit them—which, by us enacted,
Would blast with damning names!
*Emp.* Thou hast a spirit!
*Countess.* Thou knew'st he loved me, and didst covet him!
Covet a heart at second-hand—an Empress!
Hear me that am a subject, and thy subject—
His heart was mine, till thou didst rob me of it;
Not of it all, but of a part—though if
A part be gone, go all! Well, as I said,
His heart was mine at first. 'Tis gone—my peace,
Hopes, everything, along with it? What then?
Would I have it back?—No!—I would sooner die!
Its worth was its fidelity—that lost,
All 's lost. Thou coveted'st a faithless heart!
*Emp.* Didst thou deserve that heart?
*Countess*, [*weeping*]. I did!—I loved him
Better than thou couldst do!
*Emp.* I'faith, thou 'rt brave!
Thy love of him was persecution.
*Countess*, [*weeping*]. Yet
I loved him!
*Emp.* Loved him! It was tyranny,
Enforced without the mercy of a pause.
*Countess* [*weeping still, and more bitterly*]. The more I loved him!
*Emp.* Loved him!—and constrained him
To nuptials he abhorr'd.
*Countess.* I did—and then [*In an agony of tears.*
I loved him most!
*Emp.* How had it fared with him,
Hadst thou been I?
*Countess.* Far differently.
*Emp.* How?
*Countess.* I then had been above rebuke or blame!
I would have given his merits their fair field,
Encouraged them to challenge their deserts,



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Rewarded them till they had lifted him
So near equality to me, the seat
I fill'd, he might have shared along with me.
*Emp.* That field he found himself, without my aid,
I saw him there, and challenged simple greatness,
In spite of its disguise; desired it doff
Its lowly suit, and show the thing it was;
Nor stopp'd till, step by step, I saw it climb
To where it stands; nor mean I to stop there.
*Countess.* How?
*Emp.* I design him for the highest grace
I can bestow.
*Countess.* The highest!
*Emp.* Yes, beyond
His hopes, until to-day—until to-day,
Never divulged to him.
*Countess.* He knows it, then?
*Emp.* He does; and, till my promise is fulfill'd,
With fears that shake him spite of certainty
Of his immeasurable happiness—
For such he thinks it—wears a doubtful life.
*Countess.* Thy hand!
*Emp.* The hand of her, more proud to be
The empress of his heart than of my realm.
*Countess.* He shall not take it!
*Emp.* Not?
*Countess.* Thy power is huge,
But there are bounds to it!
*Emp.* What bounds?
*Countess.* Right!—Law!—
Imperial foot stops there. It dares not cross,
And if it dares, it shall not.
*Emp.* Faith, thou 'rt brave!
*Countess.* He shall not marry!
*Emp.* No?
*Countess.* No!
*Emp.* Gods, a rock!
She echoes me!
*Countess.* He shall not marry!
*Emp.* What!
Again?

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*Countess.* Wast thou the empress of the world,
I'd say to thee again—he shall not marry!
*Emp.* Thou know'st a let?
*Countess.* I do!
*Emp.* The troth he pledged
To Catherine—you see I am advised
Of all! The marriage is annull'd.
*Countess.* It is?
*Emp.* It is!
*Countess.* How?
*Emp.* By the church!
*Countess.* The church? And yet
He shall not marry!
*Emp.* What! Not marry thee?
*Countess* [*changing, and falling on her knees*].
Madam!
*Emp.* The hand that I design for him—
Crown of my favour, his deserts—is thine,
Not mine, my girl—the guerdon fair for which
He would not take my empire in exchange—
Ay, with my hand, to boot!
*Countess.* My liege, my empress!
*Emp.* My fiery queen, and have I tamed you now?
Tamed you so soon! I half repent me on't.
Mine 's the true spirit namesake! It admires
To see itself in others. 'Faith, my glass
Never reflected me more honestly
Than thou didst even now. Listen to me.
I am thy Huon's friend and nothing more.
Rise. Now we'll talk as sister does with sister.
Hither thy Huon bears me company—
Unwarn'd to what intent until to-day;
Until to-day, in darkness that the bar
The church, with thy fair aid, 'twixt him and thee
Did set—the church, at my persisting suit,
Hath quite annull'd; and now he 's in the lists
Striving to win thee! He that never yet,
In strait of life or death, much less a tilt,
Suffer'd defeat. [*Trumpets*].—That flourish is the close.
Smile at it, girl! It makes thee Huon's wife!

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Huon—no more the serf—but nobleman—
Nor nobleman alone! This hour a prince,
For thy fair sake!
*Countess* [*dejectedly to herself*]. Would he were still the serf.
*Emp.* Dejected girl!
*Countess.* Madam.
*Emp.* They come! come hither!
Here take thy seat in the centre. Here thou art chief.
We are but second! Smile—thy Huon comes!

[*Music.* ULRICK *and the rest re-enter from the Tournament. The* EMPRESS *anxiously surveys them. The* COUNTESS *absent and dejected.*

Where is he?
*Countess.* Madam?
*Emp.* Which is Huon? [*Aside to* COUNTESS.
*Countess.* Which?
*Emp.* [*aside to* COUNTESS]. Methinks he is not here; canst make him out.
Girl, tell me is thy lover here or not?
He seems not here, and yet he must be here.
*Herald.* Madam, the lists are closed. The victor waits
The prize which he has won. Shall he receive it?
*Emp.* [*aside to* COUNTESS]. Shall I say yes? I must say yes. Thou smilest.
I will say yes!—He shall receive the prize. [*Aloud.*
Who is that that bows?
*Herald.* The victor, madam.
*Emp.* [*to* COUNTESS]. Ha! Do you know him?
*Countess.* Not in his armour; yet
Methinks I ought to know him were it he.
*Emp.* Sir Knight, so please you, raise your visor. 'Tis
The prince of Milan! Girl—what means thine eye
To blaze with joy? It looks on thy despair!
The prince of Milan 'tis has won the day.
Hear'st thou me? Know'st thou what I say?
*Countess.* I do!
Both hear and comprehend thee.
*Emp.* Ay, and smile.
*Countess.* And smile.

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*Emp.* Art thou thyself? Am I myself?
I think myself the same! Where is Huon?
*Ulrick.* Gone
To take his armour off.
*Emp.* How fared it with him?
*Ulrick.* He entered first the lists, and one by one
O'erthrew all comers, till the prince of Milan
Unhorsed him.
*Countess.* Is he hurt?
*Ulrick.* No, madam.
*Countess* [*starting up*]. Thanks!
My Lord, bring Huon hither! Hither! Hie!
Now all is as it should be.
*Emp.* Should be, girl?
Say rather should not be. Thy lover 's foil'd.
Where is the ashy cheek that meets disaster,
The brow that 's like the wrack? the gusty breath?
The quivering bloodless lip and quaking frame?
These should be and they are not! Where are they?
Or rather wherefore see I in their stead
Things 'twould become to wait on holidays
Rather than days of penance? Look not thus,
Else thou wilt make me hate thee!
*Countess.* Madam, madam,
I tell thee, and believe me, all is well.
*Emp.* [*indignantly*]. Then let the prince of Milan take his prize.
*Fred.* I claim it on my knee!
(*At the moment the Prince kneels,* HUON *led by* ULRICK *enters, and the* COUNTESS *rushes towards him.*)
*Countess.* How is it, Huon?
Thou look'st as hurt.
*Huon.* Sped in the spirit, lady.
Forgetful of my charger, all unmindful
He lack'd my argument to hearten him,
Bent on the most surpassing prize alone,
I did not think to change him and he fail'd me.
*Countess.* Fortune, farewell! and pride go with thee! Go!
Welcome adversity! Shake hands with me
Thou tester of true hearts! whose homely fare

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No flatterer sits down to—hollow friend,
Foe, masking thoughts of scorn with smiling face—
But truth and honesty! affection staunch!
That grasps the hand before it scans the sleeve,
And greets the lowly portal with a grace
More winning far than his, who thanks the gate
That spreads with pride, to let a monarch in.

*Emp.* Girl, I am loth to speak in terms of blame,
But thou hast much offended courtesy:
Not only slighting me, thy sov'reign lady,
But him to whom thy fate awards thee bride!

*Countess.* A wife must be a widow ere a bride.

*Emp.* A wife? no wife art thou!

*Countess.* I am a wife!
Before this goodly presence I proclaim it.
A wife by stealth, but still a wedded wife!
Wedded for love, as fervent, durable,
As ever led a woman to the altar!

*Emp.* Where is thy husband? where is thy husband?

*Countess.* Where my remorse, contrition, deprecation,
Homage, and love, now throw me! I am kneeling
At his feet! [*Kneels to* HUON.

*Huon.* Thy husband, I?

*Countess.* My husband, thou!

*Huon.* Was I not wed to Catherine?

*Countess.* My name is Catherine, as thou shouldst know,
But, as thou knewest not, till now; the lips
Pronounced that name in wedding thee—the hand
Then given to thee—the troth then plighted thee—
Were mine as truly as the breath that now
Avows I am thy wife!—in debt to fate
For baffling thee, for now she owns thee lord
In thy adversity!

*Huon.* Thou kneel'st to me!
I marvel of thy words!—I overlook'd thee,
Madam!—My wife, rise!—pray you, rise!—my own,
My dear liege lady ever! I am feeble
In words; but, oh! the strife is strong within,
Of wonder, gratitude, humility,
Pride, honour, love, outdoing one another!

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*Enter* CATHERINE, *disguised.*

*Cath.* Fair Empress, justice!
*Emp.* Who asks for justice?
*Cath.* One that is most wrong'd
In his honour; cheated by a craven knight,
Who promised him to give him meeting here;
But hath broken his word—no doubt, through cowardice.
*Emp.* What is his name?
*Cath.* Sir Rupert.
*Sir Rup.* [*stepping forward*]. He speaks false!
I am here to my appointment.
*Cath.* Are you so?
Are you not maim'd in the arm?
*Sir Rup.* No!
*Cath.* Nor in the leg, that you can't sit your horse?
*Sir Rup.* No!
*Cath.* That is still more wonderful! Nor yet
In your spirit?
*Sir Rup.* No!
*Cath.* Most wonderful of all!
You do not mean to say you have the heart
To fight with me?
*Sir Rup.* That you shall see anon.
*Cath.* Anon, sir? now! but where are your good friends?
*Sir Rup.* Here!
[SIR OTTO *and* SIR CONRAD *come forward.*
*Cath.* Gentlemen, I am sorry for the fall
You got in tilting for the Countess; but
'Tis nothing to the one which he shall rue,
As you shall see. Down on your knees and beg
Your life.
*Sir Rup.* And beg my life!
*Cath.* Now what 's the use
Of pondering, on that which must be done.
Do not you know, sir,—have you borne cuffs
A thousand times, as well I know you have,
And know you not a bold face never yet
Made a bold heart? Down on your knees at once!
Valour won't come for stamping, sir! entreat



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Your friends to hold you, that's a better way
To pass for a brave man.
*Sir Rup.* I'll smite thee.
*Cath.* Do!
If you dare! [*Throwing off cloak.*
Ha! Have I brought thee to thy knee at last, sir?
Said I not I would bring thee to thy knees?
Beware I say not I will keep you there.
*Sir Rup.* What! Catherine?
*Countess.* Yes, Catherine, Sir Rupert.
*Sir Rup.* O happiness!
*Countess.* Which thou hast well deserved.
*Sir Rup.* Thou still wast gracious to me.
*Countess.* For thy truth,
Attested by thy jealous poverty.
I saw thy honest love for Catherine,
In secret cherish'd, as thou thought'st—as one
Conceals a costly treasure he has found,
And rightfully may keep, but being poor,
Doth fear to own, through the world's charity.
Thy Catherine, before thou fear'dst to claim,
Is render'd back to thee, confess'd thine own.
And with her, tender'd thanks, for sacrifice
In self-denying love and trust to me.
*Cath.* O more than paid in profiting her friend.
*Countess.* Yet to be paid! Huon, canst thou forgive
The scornful maid, for the devoted wife
Had cleaved to thee, though ne'er she own'd thee lord?
*Huon.* I nothing see, except thy wondrous love.
*Countess.* Madam, our happiness doth lift to thee
Its eyes in penitence and gratitude!
Thou, chief in station, first to give desert
Despite its lowliness, its lofty due!
O, thou hast taught a lesson to all greatness
Whether of rank or wealth, that 'tis the roof
Stately and broad was never meant to house
Equality alone—whose porch is ne'er
So proud, as when it welcomes in desert,
That comes in its own fair simplicity.

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# JOHN OF PROCIDA;

OR,

## THE BRIDALS OF MESSINA.

**A Tragedy,**

IN FIVE ACTS.

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TO

CAPTAIN CHARLES H. TOWNLEY, R.N.

4, GREAT GEORGE'S SQUARE, LIVERPOOL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have the greatest pride and pleasure in now redeeming an old promise—that of dedicating A PLAY of mine to you.

Whether as a gallant naval officer, an accomplished seaman, or an amiable private citizen, I do not know the man who ought to supersede you in receiving this humble heart-tribute from your affectionate and grateful servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

29, *Alfred Place, Bedford Square,*
*September*, 1840.

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

In the sweet solitudes of Loch Ard, while domesticated under the roof of my friend Mr. Robert Dick, this tragedy, like my last drama, "Love," was rapidly composed. My kind host, upon this occasion, as well as upon the former one, controlled my passion for the angle as much as he could, proportioning my indulgence in my favourite amusement to my industry and progress, which he daily watched with tyrannical scrutiny. It was needed. To him and to his amiable family I owe some of the happiest and most profitable weeks I ever spent.

The manner in which this play has been got up reflects the highest credit on Mr. and Mrs. Mathews. No expense has been shrunk from. The scenery, dresses, everything, have been supplied with lavish liberality. Zealously and ably have Mr. Bartley and Mr. Cooper superintended the rehearsals of the play.

The Messrs. Grieve have laboured hard, and not in vain, to divide with the author the credit of success—and I thank them most cordially.

I am sure the performers will carry the tragedy through triumphantly, as far as success depends on their talents and exertions. To one of them I feel bound to allude in particular, inasmuch as he is comparatively a stranger on the London boards—I mean Mr. Moore. To this gentleman I have entrusted the hero of my play; my confidence in his abilities is perfect, and will, I am satisfied, be thoroughly borne out by the result.

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## CHARACTERS.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT COVENT GARDEN, IN 1840.)

### SICILIANS.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Procida* | MR. MOORE. |
| *Fernando* | MR. ANDERSON. |
| *Guiscardo* | MR. COOPER. |
| *Martini* | MR. W. H. PAYNE. |
| *Andera* | MR. HEMMING. |
| *Carlo* | MR. BINGE. |
| *Stephano* | MR. C. J. SMITH. |
| *Thomaso* | MR. COLLETT. |
| *Francisco* | MR. MORELLI. |

### FRENCH.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Governor* | MR. DIDDEAR. |
| *Martel* | MR. BRINDAL. |
| *Louis* | MR. FITZJAMES. |
| *Ambrose* | MR. BLAND. |
| *Le Clerc* | MR. WIGAN. |
| *François* | MR. HONNER. |
| *Pierre* | MR. CONNELL. |
| *Anthonio* | MR. S. SMITH. |
| *Eugene* | MR. THOMPSON. |
| *Isoline* | MISS E. TREE. |
| *Marguerite* | MISS FITZJAMES. |

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# JOHN OF PROCIDA;

OR,

THE BRIDALS OF MESSINA.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Pass in the Mountains near Messina.*

*Enter* GUISCARDO *and* STEPHANO.

*Guis.* HIS words were fire—both light and heat! At once
With zeal they warm'd us, and convinced with reason.
I had read and heard of eloquence before,
How 'tis despotic; takes the heart by storm,
Whate'er the ramparts, prejudice, or use
Environ it withal; how, 'fore its march,
Stony resolves have given way like flax;
How it can raise, or lay, the mighty surge
Of popular commotion, as the wind,
The wave that frets the sea;—but, till to-day,
I never proved its power. When he began,
A thousand hearers prick'd their ears to list,
With each a different heart; when he left off,
Each man could tell his neighbour's, by his own.

*Steph.* Is't John of Procida?

*Guis.* So rumour says.
Who else? The constant'st friend of Sicily;
The friend that loves, yet suffers for his love.
Heard'st ever lips before, with power like his?
A holy man, and brigand, near me stood,

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Wedged by the press together; churlishly
They first endured their compell'd neighbourhood,
And shrank from contact, they would fain escape;
The one with terror; and with scorn the other,
Who blaz'd with life and passion, like a torch
Beside a taper;—such the man of prayer
Appear'd, in contrast with the freebooter.
But, lo! the change! soon as the orator
That universal chord, with master skill,
Essay'd—the love of country—like two springs,
Ravines apart, whose waters blend at last
In some sweet valley; leaning cheek to cheek,
Attracted by resistless sympathy,
Their tears together ran, one goodly river!
Hark! the dispersing crowd, taking their leave
From the last hill-tops. Let us join them. [*They cheer.*

*Steph.* Hither
Come Andrea and John of Procida.
Let's on, my friend, nor interrupt their converse,
For it seems deep, and earnest.

*Guis.* Have with you.
I would Fernando had been here, that friend
I scarce can boast, yet can't refrain to love.
If there be latent virtue in his blood,
O' the kind endears the land that gives us birth,
Such heart enforcement sure had call'd it forth!
[*They go out.*

*Enter* PROCIDA, *disguised as a Cordelier, and* ANDREA.

*And.* You move my wonder past the speaking on't.
I never dream'd in such extremity,
Such hope could be so near!

*Pro.* 'Tis in the crisis
The fever does or dies. Our friends abroad
Are warm and not a few; the fleet you see
In the offing, and supposed the Pope's, is ours;
At home, Sicilians are as one single man,
Their thoughts, their feelings, their resolves, the same.
In this disguise, each quarter of the isle
Where man hath habitation, house, or cave,
I have visited; and tuned the minds of all

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To the same temper and the selfsame aim,
Vengeance and Liberty! Before a week
The hordes of France shall dwindle to the man
Whose execution ends them.
*And.* Retribution
Indeed!
*Pro.* Yes; sweeping and definitive.
Thou seem'st to lower at it. Hast any part
In France! Dost owe her kindliness or ruth?
The tyranny that Sicily weeps daily
With blood?—her children's scourge, as testify
Murder and rapine, that unblushingly
Enact their parts in open day, and lust
With quite as little shame? I know that men
Will turn to tigers in a stormed town
That 's yielded them to sack; but Syracuse,
Palermo, and Messina, stood no siege,
And yet they sack'd them, and the game goes on,
And in cold blood. What weighs upon thy heart?
Or what can weigh when thy dear native land
Is nigh to throw her grievous burden off?
*And.* 'Twas not with heed for France my visage fell,
But thee.
*Pro.* But me! For what?
*And.* Those who devote themselves
To virtuous causes, where bad men prevail
And breed contamination, have at times
A hard and most ungracious part to play,
When those they love behoves they mark to suffer.
*Pro.* Whom do I mark to suffer, yet do love?
I have no kindred, have I? If I have,
It must be only in that far degree
Where distance genders strangeness.
*And.* Hadst thou not
A son?
*Proc.* Thou know'st I had! Thou know'st he's dead!
The infant perish'd in the sacking of
My castle!—So it was affirmed by one
Who brought the horrid tale—Is he alive?
*And.* Be patient! You remember, do you not,

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When he was four years old, or thereabouts—
You told me his age, for he was then a boy
Might pass for six, and I did take him for it,
He was so fine a child—you recollect
At e'en that tender age a hard excrescence,
And something like a wart, but larger, which
Like threatening mischief had begun to grow,
At thy request I from his fore-arm cut.
'Twas rooted deep; as deep of course the wound,
And, answering to the knife, of crucial form!
*Pro.* I recollect it! Is the boy alive?
*And.* Listen! 'Twas here I cut it from his arm.
'Tis true another might have such a cause
For surgery in even such a place,
And such a scar the remedy might leave;
Though to my own hand I could safely swear.
*Pro.* Hast seen the mark on any one?
*And.* I pray you
Hear what I have to tell, then draw yourself
The inference.
*Pro.* O Heaven! I have a son,
And he 's in jeopardy, and I the cause!
*And.* Remember you one Angelo Martini?
*Pro.* Master-of-arms?
*And.* The same; I went to see
The practice at his school. One—a young man
Of most commanding person, and of 'haviour
To win all hearts—took up the foil to play,
And baring his right arm for freer use.—
*Pro.* You saw the mark! You saw the scar!
*And.* I did.
The very cicatrix my knife had left.
*Pro.* I have not heard news of late—and such as this
Comes somewhat suddenly. Is he a man
Of honour?
*And.* I would think him so.
*Pro.* Would think?
Nay, then, I see what he is!
*And.* Indeed, my friend,
I cannot say he is, nor yet, is not.
*Pro.* You say he stands in danger, and from me.

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'Tis clear as day—I comprehend it all!
He takes the part of France! His heart is French!
What Sicily gave him he gives to France,
The curse of Sicily! And if a sword
Lights on his head for that, who'll blame the smiter?
Not his own father?—Where abideth he?
*And.* In Messina, with the governor.
*Pro.* Perdition!
Scarce is the worst told, ere worse follows it!
The governor!
*And.* Nay, John of Procida,
Command thyself!
*Pro.* Could'st thou, if thou wast I?
Didst question him about that scar? Perhaps
'Tis not my son! O Heaven! in what a strait
A father may be put. I wish'd him dead
Just now. I own I did. Didst speak to him
About that mark?
*And.* No—there were standers by.
*Pro.* You follow'd him out?
*And.* No.
*Pro.* No!
*And.* One beckon'd me
Apart, and held mine ear; and when I turn'd
To look for him, I miss'd him. He had gone!
*Pro.* You have seen him since, and spoken with him!
*And.* No:
I have craved an audience, but was out of time.
*Pro.* Indeed! A mighty man! You should have thrust
All let aside, and walk'd into his chamber,
And told him who you were—and what he was!
*And.* You do forget I was a stranger to him.
*Pro.* You did forget you were his father's friend,
And by that title had a right to see him
At any place, at any hour o' the day.
Whom does he pass for?
*And.* Not thy son.
*Pro.* That's right!
I am very glad of that!
*And.* All I could learn

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Was this;—that in the sacking of thy castle
He only did escape, a little child.
The governor adopted him, and gave him
The liberal training of a cavalier.
Favour on kindness grew, and love on favour.
And e'en to-day the governor bestows
His only daughter on him.
*Pro.* Pestilence
Spring from their union if they wed!
*And.* My friend!
*Pro.* When is the ceremony?
*And.* I have said
To-day.
*Pro.* The hour—I mean the very hour.
*And.* At twelve.
*Pro.* Let the world end ere it takes place!
It must be stopp'd.
*And.* And who shall stop it?
*Pro.* I!
Straight to Messina. Come! The shortest way!
[*They go out.*

## SCENE II.—*A Street in Messina.*

*Enter* STEPHANO, THOMASO, CARLO.

*Carlo.* No mischief come last night to any friends
Of yours?
*Steph.* None, sir, that I have heard.
*Carlo.* No throat
In frolic cut? No gamesome robbery?
No courtesy on wife or daughter forced
Of any that you know?
*Steph.* None.
*Carlo.* Luckless man!
My brother was compell'd keep open shop
After the hour of shutting—customers
So hot, there's not a shelf he hath but gapes
For new replenishing! And that took place
Not half a month before. No pleasant news
With you? [*To* THOMASO.

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*Thom.* None yet!
*Carlo.* Take comfort, it will come
Before we get to the end of the next street.
The French do love us, sirs; and, like true friends,
Will keep our spirits from stagnation, though
It be against our wills. You know 'tis health.
Come on. We'll have more news, and plenty on't.
[*Going.*
*Guis.* [*without, at the opposite side.*] Thomaso! Stephano! Stop! Turn! [*Enters.*] At last
You hear me, sirs! I am breathed with chasing you!
Why were you not at home?
*Thom.* Why, what's the matter?
*Guis.* Blood, sirs!
*Carlo.* There's news!
*Guis.* News! 'Tis the common cry
Of every day!
*Thom.* Yes; but the common'st thing
That affects others, hath a stranger's face
When it comes home to us. Whose blood, Guiscardo?
Take breath and tell us.
*Guis.* Are you not akin
To Angelo Martini?
*Thom. and Steph.* What of him?
*Guis.* His house did suffer shame last night! his daughter!
His only child!—That force could dare assail
A temple of such holy chastity!
The spoiler of her honour and her life—
For with her virgin jewel did he take
The witness of the theft—a mangled corse,
Cast into the street by Angelo, who came
Too late to save, but timely for revenge,
Lies 'fore the father's gate, which hounds beset,
More monstrous for the human forms they wear,
Howling to lap the blood of Angelo;
And casting looks of savage purposes
On the few friends, that, holding yet aloof,
With augmentation might defy their fangs.
Have you your weapons?
*Steph.* Yes. Who goes without

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That walks through streets of licensed murderers?
*Guis.* Grasp them then! Hie ye straight to Angelo.
While I unto the castle speed to move
A friend's good offices to stop the fray.
The favourite of the governor—Fernando.
And be ye resolute, comes it to more blood!
Death's nothing to the fear! There lies the pang,
And that we suffer every hour in the day.
[*They go out severally.*

SCENE III.—*A Chamber in the Castle.*

*Enter* MARTEL *and* LOUIS.

*Martel.* What uproar keeps this din without the castle?
*Louis.* I know not, but the town is all astir;
Hither and thither fly the citizens.
What can it mean?
*Martel.* Here's one will give the cause.

*Enter* AMBROSE.

Well, Ambrose?
*Amb.* Count de Marlez has been murdered,
And cast into the street! his body hack'd
From head to foot.
*Martel.* Who did it?
*Amb.* Angelo
Martini.
*Martel.* Was it in a quarrel, or
Did he assassinate him?
*Amb.* I know not.
This moment come I from before the house
Of Angelo Martini, which the friends
Of the slain Count beset, while close at hand
Those of Martini wait, as if prepared
To take part with the murderer: who, the while,
From open casement in the upper floor,
With savage looks, holds forth a gory arm,
Grasping a blade of the same ghastly hue,
And, waving 't o'er the body of his child,
Blanch'd milk-white of her blood, and half exposed,

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Declares he'll ne'er surrender, save a corse
Mangled like his below.
*Martel.* Some love affair!
Conquerors do not brook coy mistresses!
*Louis.* This falls out ominously, does it not,
Upon the nuptial day?
*Martel.* The nuptial hour!
Strange nuptials, sir! It oft has moved my wonder
The Governor, a stern and gloomy man,
Should so affect the young Sicilian.
Is't love? I have mark'd him oft, with looks that spoke
Aught but content, gazing upon Fernando
Minutes together; then, with deepest sigh,
Break off the scrutiny—for such it seem'd—
And turn to moody pondering. His daughter
Were better wed, methinks, to one of France
Than to a son of Sicily, of blood
Unknown, and all unfriended like her bridegroom.
*Le Clerc* [*without*]. Prevent him! Stop him!
*Guis.* [*without*]. Nay,
I will pass in!
*Martel.* Suffer him, good Le Clerc;
I know him. He 's Fernando's friend, and comes
Doubtless to speak with him.
*Louis.* How wild he looks!
*Amb.* And spectre-like.
*Guis.* [*rushing in, followed by* LE CLERC]. Fernando! Sirs! Fernando!
*Martel.* Why, what 's amiss?
*Guis.* Don't question me, dear sirs;
Fernando!
*Martel.* Here he is.

*Enter* FERNANDO.

*Guis.* [*catching* FERNANDO *by the arm*]. Come forth with me!
Come!—Angelo Martini!—
*Fern.* [*resisting*]. Stop.
*Guis.* Nay, come!
Come!



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*Fern.* What 's the matter ?
*Guis.* Read it in my looks,
And save the time of telling on't !—or come
And I will tell you as we go along !
Come !
*Fern.* Hold ! you'll tear my sleeve. Do you not know
It is my wedding-day ?
*Guis.* Do you not know
A man call'd Angelo Martini, and
Seest not he is in danger ?
*Fern.* I infer so.
*Guis.* Thou dost ? and art not now upon the way
To his house ? Thy tutor ! Angelo Martini !
'Sdeath, art thou flesh or stone ? Offer'st thou not
To move !
*Fern.* You'll find it husbandry of time
To spend what's needed ; else, you save to waste.
What of Martini ?
*Guis.* Ay !—So !—Is't the way ?
Ought friends to take it leisurely in straits
Where hottest speed is slow to those they love
Lying in jeopardy ? Sit down, sir. Well
[*Seats himself.*
We sit as stand—we progress either way
As fast. Sit down and listen. Yesternight—
Pray you your chair—I cannot well go on
Until I see you at your ease. [FERNANDO *sits.*]—
Last night,
As I said, a thief—not such as filches coin—
Was the unbidden guest of Angelo ;
Chamber'd with his fair child, without her leave,
As her gored breast can vouch for you ; Angelo—
I trust my tongue does not outstep your ear ?
*Fern.* Go on !
*Guis.* In good time, sir. Well ! Angelo,
Waked by a shriek—'twas not without the house,
But came from the quarter where his daughter couch'd—
And—taking the strange summons with more heat
Of apprehension, than will suffer one
That hath the use of limb to lie abed,
Or sit his chair as we do—to afford

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The aid was needed, rush'd where he might give it,
And at the door encounter'd him who'd made him
A host without his privity or wish,
Dagger in hand, sir, slinking from the bier
Had been, an hour before, the virgin's bed!
*Fern.* What follow'd?
*Guis.* One might guess, a blow!— Yes, sir—
While the blood runs 'twill heat or cool upon
Occasion. Yes, sir; Angelo, our friend,
A generous man, although we say it, like
To exact penalty for injury
Done to a common friend (and how much more
An only child!) struck—nor with naked hand,
Nor easily contented! Blow begot
Blow, till the body of the Count—
*Fern.* What Count?
*Guis.* The Count de Marlez.
*Fern.* Was he stabb'd by Angelo?
*Guis.* —And stabb'd till not a palm's breadth of his body
But bears the crimson seal that witnesses
The glut of ravening vengeance! as it lies
In the street cast forth the casement, of whose sill
Angelo makes a bier to show his child
To the amaze-benumbed lookers-on.
While the retainers, countrymen, and friends
Of the Count assault the gate of Angelo
To get at him and tear him limb from limb.
The which thy timely presence had prevented.
But not enough thou know'st thy friend doth need thee.
Behoves his need be woven a history,
And while the loom's a-going I must ply,
They massacre the man who taught and loved thee!
*Fern.* Go forth, my friends, and succour Angelo.
Take others with you—all the aid you can.
Dissuade his enemies from violence.
Use the Duke's name. Command them to forbear,
And leave rebuke to him.
[MARTEL *and others rush out.*
*Guis.* Go'st thou not too?
Play'st thou the friend by heartless deputy,



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To foil the foes that work with all their hearts!
Keep'st thou the castle when Martini's house
Is made the stall of savage butchery?
Lend'st him a finger when he wants thy hand,
Thy limbs, and body?

*Fern.* 'Tis my wedding-day;
The very hour I lead my bride to church.

*Guis.* Thou wast his son to Angelo Martini,
And when thy presence would be life to him,
And it is ask'd of thee, thou givest it not,
But send'st him that of men who'd look with coldness,
If not with joy, upon Martini's carcass!
Because thy nuptials may not be delay'd!
Ached thy bride's head, would it not stop them?—or
Would they go on, fell the Duke sudden sick?
Or chanced to shake Messina with a fit
Of the earthquake? or the cataracts of Etna
Began to play?—But not a pause, although
Thou heard'st the life blood gurgling in the throat
Of Angelo Martini! Fare thee well—
If well ingratitude did ever fare.
Mingle thy blood with those, at thought of whom,
Wast thou the tithe of a Sicilian,
Thy blood would curdle. We were brothers once;
One mind—one soul! We now are two—apart!
Disjoin'd! Opposed! Never to meet again
Except to the woe of the one or other of us.

[*Goes out.*

*Fern.* Come back! Fool! Meddler! Braggart!

*Iso.* [*entering*]. How is this?
What dost thou with thy weapon in thy hand!
Ha! by thy looks, it was not without need
Thou drewest it! Sweet heaven! I saw thee thus
Last night!

*Fern.* Where, dearest?

*Iso.* In my dreams, Fernando;
That brought me naught but fearful images!
Tumults where daggers gleam'd and blood did run
Along the kennels of the streets, instead
Of its own channels. There, my friend, were you
And I in the midst, your one arm circling me,

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Your other my defence 'gainst horrid men
That stood around, a stride or two aloof,
Like hounds, awhile at bay, prepared to spring!
Ah! then had I a taste of death—great Heavens!
The sickness on't! Yet e'en that sickness still
Sweetness, methought, to die along with thee.
They struck—you fell! I waked while yet the room
Rang with a shriek. Put up thy sword, lest now
A prodigy should harrow up my soul,
And drops of gore, uncall'd, start on its blade!
Is't up?

*Fern.* It is.

*Iso.* 'Tis very strange, Fernando;
This is our wedding-day, and yet I feel
As though we should not marry.

*Fern.* Wouldst thou then
Our nuptials should be marr'd?

*Iso.* No!—Would you think
'Twas the coy maid of but a week ago
That answered you so promptly? 'Twas not quickly
I learned to love you—though, to do you justice,
No master ever labour'd more to teach.
But now, methinks, I have the lesson better
By heart than you have.

*Fern.* Better!

*Iso.* Yes, Fernando!
And so you'd find, were you to slight the pupil
You took such pains with once. I would not have
Our nuptials marr'd—and, more, they shan't be so
Have I the power to help it.

*Fern.* Isoline,
Thy father!—

*Iso.* Well?—Say on;
I'd hear thee say't though all the world were by.

*Fern.* I bless thee for thy bounteous love!

*Enter* GOVERNOR.

*Gov.* Come, child!
And on my other hand, Fernando, come.
The bridal company, in readiness

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To attend you to the altar, wait for you.

[*As they are going*, MARTEL *and* LOUIS *enter hastily.*

What would you, friends?

*Martel.* A word, sir, with Fernando.

*Gov.* Be brief, then, as you may.

[*Leading* ISOLINE *off.*

*Iso.* [*stopping and turning*]. Fernando!

*Fern.* Love,
A moment and I'm with you!

*Gov.* Isoline!

*Iso.* I come!—the ground appears to hold my steps.

[*She goes out with the* GOVERNOR.

*Fern.* Well, friends; were you in time?

*Martel.* To see the house
Of Angelo Martini in a blaze;
Lit by his own hand, the funereal pyre
Of his slain child. Whence, soon as 'twas in flames,
Taking advantage of the pause in which
Amaze enchain'd his foes, with clotted blade
Did Angelo burst forth, a spectacle
Of blood-congealing horror, that awhile
Deprived of use the members which unless
For such a frost had dealt him fifty deaths.
But soon it turn'd to thaw, yet not until
Martini's friends surrounded him; and now
Along the streets a running fight they keep,
Leaving an ample, ghastly track, with blood,
And here and there a body drain'd of it.

*Fern.* For mercy's sake provide you with a guard
And use all pains to stop this hideous fray,
And above all to save Martini's life!
Fly friends! O spare not speed! Do all you can
This swift untimely mischief to o'ertake!

[MARTEL *and* LOUIS *go out;* FERNANDO *following.*

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## SCENE IV.—*The Outside of a Church.*

*Enter* Virgins *strewing Flowers after the Bridal Party.*

CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

As now the track with flowers we strew
Your path of life with joys be fair!
Though wither these, no fading there;
Nor thorny care your footsteps rue.

[*At the end of the Singing, Tumult is heard without at a distance.*]

*Gov.* What din is this that seems approaching us?
*Le Clerc.* [*Entering hastily*]. My lord, take shelter
in the church! There's death
In the streets.
*Gov.* What! Of Messina, sir; and I
Its governor? Am I to slink away
In fear? Swords, gentlemen! What man is he
Comes first? who flies? yet halts,—whom they in chase of
Do strive, yet seem to fear, to overtake,
Turning pursuit to flight whene'er he stops
And shows them front?
*Le Clerc.* 'Tis Angelo Martini.
*Gov.* What savage deed hath made a brute of him
That men become a pack, and hunt him thus?
*Le Clerc.* He has kill'd the Count de Marlez.
*Fern.* Life for life!
The Count did kill his daughter. Little wrong,
To wrong most grievous that preceded it.
*Gov.* You are sure of this.
*Fern.* I am.
*Gov.* Succour him, sirs.
*Fern.* Too late!
*Mart.* [*without*]. Take that!
[*Enters staggering, followed by* GUISCARDO *and others with swords drawn.*
—Full payment, slave, and prompt!
As you are christian men, don't suffer them
Hack me to death. I am wounded mortally! [*Falls.*
*Fern.* How is it, Angelo Martini?
*Mart.* Thus,

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Fernando, thus! My daughter!—Where were you?
But I forgive you! [*Dies.*]

*Fern.* O, look up, old man!

*Guis.* He sleeps too sound, Fernando, to awake!
My lord, the Governor, protection for
The friends of Angelo Martini, who,
With naked weapons had not stood in the streets
But to protect him from foul butchery.
His house did suffer violence last night,
And murder in the person of his child,
Now burn'd to ashes with her natal roof,
Which Angelo himself in frenzy fired.
He caught and slew the caitiff, for which act,
By nature warranted, if not by law,
Began this game of death, which we would spoil,
But thus the just yet weaker side hath lost.

*Gov.* Though great his crime first slain, the blood so shed
Was French! Moreover, it was noble! Look
Yourselves to your lives—I will not answer for them
Beyond Messina. Hence, and sheathe your blades.
Marks are upon them that offend our eyes,
And breed you danger.

*Guis.* Are we safe the while?

*Gov.* You are, but quit Messina. Guard them to
The outskirts of the town.

*Guis.* Fernando, speak.
Look there. Your bridal flowers have gone, you see,
To deck a bloody bier. So fare thy joys!
[*Goes out with others guarded.*

*Gov.* Remove the body. In our way it lies.

*Iso.* Nay, father; sooner let us go about!

*Gov.* Come on, then.

*Pro.* [*coming from the back of the stage*]. Stop.
The rites must not proceed.

*Gov.* They have not yet begun!

*Pro.* Nor must begin.

*Gov.* Who shall prevent them?

*Pro.* Heaven. In the name of which
I charge you to desist.

*Gov.* Your reasons?

*Pro.* Those

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The bridegroom shall be told; for him
They most regard.
*Fern.* Impart them, then!
*Pro.* Not here.
*Gov.* You juggle with us!
*Pro.* No; the part I act
Is honest.
*Gov.* You are a religious man?
*Pro.* A man devoted to a holy cause.
Young man, let go that hand and come with me.
*Iso.* Is this the dark fulfilling of my dream?
Respect you, my Fernando, what he says?
*Fern.* His tone, his words, his looks, his gestures, all
Declare authority.
*Iso.* O, do not go?
*Pro.* He must, would he escape my curse, which here
On him, and all who hold alliance with him,
I shall invoke, resisting my commands.
*Gov.* You dare not do it!
*Pro.* Dare not!—listen then—
*Iso.* Peace!—drop my hand and go.
*Pro.* She bids thee go.
Come.
*Iso.* Go, Fernando!
*Pro.* Mark, again she bids thee.
Why shouldst thou hesitate? The cause is thine.
And thou thyself art constituted judge.
I hope thou 'rt a brave man, and not afraid
To trust thyself with me. If idly, or
On slight pretence I interpose, thou knowest
Thou canst come back, and then the rites go on.
So mayst thou gain thy bride, and 'scape my curse.
*Iso.* Shall he come back in any case?
*Pro.* He shall.
*Iso.* Go! go! Fernando.
*Pro.* That is the third time
She bade thee go.
*Fern.* I follow!
*Pro.* Come along.

[PROCIDA *and* FERNANDO *go out.* ISOLINE *faints in her father's arms, as the latter disappears.*



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## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*A Mountain Pass. Etna in the distance.*

*Enter* PROCIDA *and* FERNANDO.

*Pro.* Look up. What seest thou?
*Fern.* Etna.
*Pro.* Where stands Etna?
*Fern.* In Sicily.
*Pro.* Then this is Sicily,
Where Etna stands, and thou look'st up to it.
And yet, methinks, thou knowest not thou stand'st
In Sicily.
*Fern.* I know it as well as thou.
*Pro.* Deny it, then! Tell him who says thou stand'st there
He is mistaken! Rather say thou stand'st
In any other isle that spots the sea;
And give thy oath to it, though Etna there,
Before thee, should break silence at the lie,
And bellow forth—"'Tis Sicily thou stand'st in!"
*Fern.* Beware! young blood is hot.
*Pro.* Behoves it, then,
Beware it runs no peril from its heat.
Young blood is generous, too!—not always!—then
Its heat is virtue bringing virtue forth,
As sun the healthful plant in stronger flower.
Its heat is as the thing it acts upon,
As summer in the garden genders fruit,
But in the swamp breeds poison. Know me, sir,
So far. I wear a sword! [*throws off his gown*] Now, of thy heat
Why should I stand in fear?
*Fern.* Lest thou offend
Mine honour!
*Pro.* Show it me, I'll not offend it;
Else I offend mine own. If I gainsay
The square, the plummet, or the level, what

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Shall I gain credence for? I am a fool
Or knave. I either know not; or deny,
Yet know. But honour is the name as well
As thing, and with the thing not always goes,
But serves a spurious owner, as the stamp
Of gold at times is given to base coin.
The gambler that will load a die, will cut
Your throat, so you dare tell him on't—for honour!
The libertine who uses, for your shame,
Your hospitable trust—a felon, worse
Than he who filches purses with his sword—
Demands your blood, if you impugn his honour!
Whence, with a coward world, the bully lust
Hath gracious entertainment at the hands
Which hold the custody of maidens' snow,
And never question'd matrons. What do you say
To the honour of a traitor—false at once
To his liege lord and country? taking part
With their arch, pitiless, contentless foes?
Shall such a man have honour? Ay, shall he so,
Hath he the bloodhound's quality to vouch
The barefaced lie a truth!

*Fern.* Thou lovest danger!

*Pro.* No, I love virtue, sir, and fear not danger.
Art thou Sicilian?

*Fern.* Yes.

*Pro.* Sicilian born?

*Fern.* Yes.

*Pro.* In the mountain island first drew breath?

*Fern.* Yes.

*Pro.* Art thou sure? Where saw'st thou first the sun,
To know him as thou recollectest?

*Fern.* In
Messina.

*Pro.* Knowest thou the history
Of this thy native land? Who was her king
When first thou madest acquaintance with the sun,
The blessed sun God gave thee leave to see
When he vouchsafed thee draw the breath of life
In Sicily?

*Fern.* Why Manfred then was king.

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*Pro.* What came of him?
*Fern.* He lost his crown.
*Pro.* 'Tis false!
*Fern.* [*aside.*] What power hath this mysterious man
That while he chafes me thus, I thus forbear!
*Pro.* Were one to take thy purse from thee by force,
Wouldst say that thou hadst lost it? Thou wouldst say
That thou wast robb'd of it. So Manfred was
Robb'd of his crown. Lost it! Who say you now
Is king of Sicily?
*Fern.* Charles of Anjou.
*Pro.* That 's false
Again! Charles of Anjou is a usurper
And not a king—not king of Sicily.
Manfred was slain in battle, was he not?
*Fern.* He was.
*Pro.* He was. He died as became a king
Defending his own crown against the robber
Who wrench'd it from his brow. You answer well.
You know your country's history. What next?
Who follow'd in the strife? Who struggled next
With the arch felon? held his throat to him—
For it was nothing else, with powers so broken—
Ere he would tamely be a looker-on,
And see him wear the spoil?
*Fern.* Conradine.
*Pro.* Yes!
The chivalrous, the patriotic prince!
He took the cause up—but he lost the day.
*Fern.* And with the day his life.
*Pro.* How? Can't you tell?
Know you so far the tragedy so well,
And do you halt at the catastrophe
Which brings the crowning horror of the whole?
The Prince was taken captive—taken alive—
Whole! without scath! No wound, the matter even
Of a pin's scratch! Now mark the freebooter
In Charles of Anjou—him thou namedst now
The King of Sicily Mark now how blood
And plunder go together like sworn friends.
Conradine was a captive. What had he done?

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What Charles himself had done in such a case,
And had a right so to have done, were he
A saint and not a robber. Fought for the crown
Of his forefathers! What could Conradine
That Charles need fear? He was bound hand and foot.
He was as one that's bedridden! that's struck
With a palsy! Charles had just as much to fear
From Conradine as from an infant in the cradle.
What did he to him?—He beheaded him!
*Fern.* 'Twas sacrilege!
*Pro.* 'Twas murder!—murder, sir!
Murder and sacrilege!—Conradine met the scaffold
In his own kingdom, like a host that's butcher'd
In his own house, by thieves! Now mark, young man,
How bruised, broken, lost in fortunes, still
The noble spirit to the last bears up
And towers above its fate. Beside the block,
Within the axe's glare, yet would not he
Give up his righteous cause, but from his hand
His gauntlet drew and flung into the space
'Twixt him and those who came to see him die.
"For Jesu' sake," he cried, "who loves me there
Pick up my gage, and with it take the charge
A dying man gives with his parting breath,
That he present it to that kinsman of
My house who takes its rightful quarrel up,
And whom with all my rights I here invest!"—
I see the story somewhat touches thee.
*Fern.* I never heard it told so well before.
Wast thou a stander by?
*Pro.* I was. What then?
*Fern.* Didst thou pick up the gage?
*Pro.* Wouldst thou have done it?
*Fern.* I would.
*Pro.* And wherefore?
*Fern.* Out of pity for
That murder'd king.
*Pro.* What!—Given thy private cares,
Hopes, havings, up, to consecrate thy life
To his most desperate cause—his throne usurp'd!
His land o'errun! his people scatter'd, that

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Together not so many hang as one
Might call a broken troop !—So seeming-lost
A cause as that, at cost so dear hadst thou
Embraced, and ta'en the gauntlet up ?

*Fern.* I had !

*Pro.* [*taking a glove from his breast.*] There 'tis !
There !—as I pluck'd it from the scaffold foot !
The look that martyr cast upon me then,
It shed more healing unction on my soul,
Than fifty thousand masses at my death
Could do, each chanted by as many lips,
And all of holy men. Now mark how Right,
Although, at setting out, a dwarf in thews
By holding on will gather sinew, till
It moves that giant Might. With seconding,
Levies, munitions, allies, subsidies—
None other than this empty glove, I went
From Sicily ; where now I stand again,
With monarchs and their kingdoms at my back,
The sworn abettors of the righteous hand
Which, fleshless, tendonless, reduced to bone,
Its holy cause with life thus clothes again,
And arms with retribution. That same hand
Once fill'd this glove, which now I hold to thee.
Take it.

*Fern.* For what ?

*Pro.* To swear by it.

*Fern.* The oath ?

*Pro.* Death to the Gaul whoe'er he be, that now
Has footing in the land !—Death without pause
Of ruth—eye, ear, be stone to voice or look
Of deprecation ! Once your blade is out,
While there 's a tyrant's heart to lend a sheath,
Never to let it know its own !

*Fern.* That oath
I will not take.

*Pro.* Thou wilt not ? Thou 'rt a traitor !

*Fern.* Ha !

*Pro.* Thou 'rt a coward !

*Fer.* [*drawing*]. Try if I fear death !

*Pro.* Death is a little thing to brave or fear.

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Except a thought of the after reckoning,
The which to fear becomes, not shames a man:
'Tis but a plunge and over, ta'en as oft
By the feeble as the stout. Give me the man
That 's bold in the right—too bold to do the wrong!
Not bold as that, thou art a traitor still
And coward!

*Fern.* Draw!

*Pro.* For what? To pleasure thee?
To place myself on base equality
With one whom I look down upon?

*Fern.* Or draw,
Or I will spurn thee.

*Pro.* Villain, to thy knee!

*Fern.* My knee!

*Pro.* What! fear'st thou degradation? How
Can he crouch lower than he does who kneels
To his own weaknesses, when Duty bids him
Stand up and take the manly post becomes him
At the side of Virtue? Were thy mother—she
That bore thee in her womb—in fetters, how
Wouldst deal with those that put them on? Wouldst talk
And laugh with them—shake hands with them—embrace them?
"Thou wouldst not!" But I tell thee, slave, thou wouldst.
For what 's thy country, be she not thy mother,
And like a mother loved by thee? Thou slave,
That seekest kindred with thy country's foes!
Hast thou a father?

*Fern.* Draw!

*Pro.* Hast thou a father?

*Fern.* But with my sword's point will I answer thee!

*Pro.* Hast thou a father, boy?

*Fern.* Hast thou a hand?
Behoves that it be quick, and seek thy sword!
Thy life 's in danger!

*Pro.* Hast thou a father, still
I say to thee?

*Fern.* Thy sword, or I'm upon thee!

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*Pro.* Then wilt thou have a murder on thy soul,
For from my stand I will not budge an inch,
Nor move, so far, my arm to touch my sword,
Until thou answer'st me. Hast thou a father?
*Fern.* [*bursting into tears.*] No,—no! thou churlish,
harsh, remorseless man—
That bait'st me with thy coarse and biting words,
As boors abroad let loose unmuzzled dogs
Upon a tether'd beast! my arm withheld
By thy defencelessness, that hast defence
At hand, but will not use it—who art thou
To use me thus? to do me shameful wrong
And then deny me means to right myself?
What have I done to thee to use my heart
As if its strings were thine to strain or rend!
Thou mak'st my veins hot with my boiling blood,
And not content, thou followest it up,
Mine eyes inflaming with my scalding tears,
Thou kindless, ruthless man! Hast thou a father?
I never knew one!
*Pro.* [*aside*]. I thank God!
*Fern.* Thou hadst
A father—hadst a father's training—O
How blest the son that hath! O Providence,
What is there like a father to a son?
A father, quick in love, wakeful in care,
Tenacious of his trust, proof in experience,
Severe in honour, perfect in example,
Stamp'd with authority! Hadst such a father?
I knew no training, save what fostering
Did give me, in the mood; and was bestow'd
Like bounty to a poor dependant; which
He might take or leave. Those who protected me
Were masters of my native land, not sons.
How could I learn the patriot's lofty lesson?
They told me Sicily had given me birth,
But then they taught me also I was son
To a contentless and ungracious mother.
And they were kind to me. What wouldst thou have
Of a young heart, but what you'd ask of wax—
To take the first impression given to it?

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Except that, unlike wax, it is not quick
What once it takes to render up again.
*Pro.* [*aside*]. O, my poor boy!
*Fern.* If thou hadst a father,
'Twas cruel, knowing that thou wast so rich,
To taunt me, where, knew'st not that I was poor,
Thou mightst at least suspect my poverty.
How had I loved my father! He had had
The whole of my heart. I would have given it him
As a book to write in it whate'er he would.
I never had gainsaid him—never run
Counter to him. I had copied him, as one
A statute doth of the rare olden virtue,
In jealous, humble imitation.
I had lived to pleasure him. Before I had
Disgraced him, I had died.
*Pro.* [*aside.*] My son! My son!
*Fern.* Thou weep'st! O Heaven!
*Pro.* Thou wast made captive in
A stormed hold.
*Fern.* I was.
*Pro.* That hold belong'd
To John of Procida.
*Fern.* It did.
*Pro.* 'Twas storm'd
And taken, in his absence.
*Fern.* So 'tis said.
*Pro.* That John of Procida had then a son
Just four years old.
*Fern.* That age was mine, I have heard,
When first the Governor adopted me.
*Pro.* There was no other child within the castle.
*Fern.* Was there not?
*Pro.* No!
*Fern.* I must have been that child!
*Pro.* Upon his right fore-arm he bore a mark.
*Fern.* Yes; here!
*Pro.* Yes; in the very place thou point'st to.
*Fern.* I am the son of John of Procida!
*Pro.* Thou art;—and I am John of Procida.
*Fern.* [*falling on his knee.*] Father!

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*Pro.* My son! My boy! My child I left
At four years old and thought was dead!
*Fern.* Thou own'st me?
*Pro.* Own thee!—Ay!—Look at me and tell me, boy,
Dost thou not see thy father?
*Fern.* Yes! Thy looks
Are words of love that call me from thy feet
Up to thy arms.
*Pro.* Up to them, then!
*Fern.* [*rising, and throwing himself into the arms of* PROCIDA.] My father!
*Pro.* O, my son!
*Fern.* What shall I do?
*Pro.* What mean you?
*Fern.* What shall I do?
Give me the glove!
*Pro.* My son!
*Fern.* The gauntlet of
The martyr king!
*Pro.* There!—Stop! Not now, my son;
I find thee quick in the affection
Thou owest me, and which, like a new spring
Just struck upon, doth bubble richly up
And run an ample torrent. No, my son;
I will not take advantage of the burst
To let it hurry thee along with it.
A sudden change and violent, is scarce
A lasting one. Thou mightst repent it. No;
I'll prove thee ere thou join'st the holy cause.
Thou to Messina shalt return once more,
Before thou see'st her free. My word was given.
Thou art a man. Men that uphold the name
Act, not from impulse, but reflection.
Declare thy meditated nuptials things
Thy duty to thy neighbour and thy God
Compels thee to abandon. Then come back,
From every let released, and take the oath,
And live the son of John of Procida.
*Fern.* When I can say thy first behest is done,
I'll show myself to thee. Farewell! [*Goes out.*
*Pro.* Farewell!

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How suddenly his visage brighten'd up,
At mention of returning to Messina.
What speed is there! Is 't all on my account?
Now he is gone my heart misgives me. What
Have I done! Why do we pray that we be spared
Temptation, but that 'tis a whirlpool, which,
Once we 're within its vortex, draws us in
And sucks us down to ruin—Charybdis like!
Which of the huge war-galley makes as light,
As boat, compared to that, a cockle-shell!
Whence should all men that love their souls beware
Temptation. I will call him back! He is out
Of hearing. Should his love for her be strong?
I did not note if she was very fair.
But souls were never made for eyes to read,
And there lies woman's beauty. If she loves
Strongly—and O how strongly woman loves—
The force of two hearts must he struggle with.
I 'll trust in Heaven! Alas! how many men
Do trust in Heaven, when they betray themselves!
If he 's my son—! I talk with fifty years
For counsellors! O, it was oversight,
Preposterous in a father! If I have found
My son to lose him—best I ne'er had found him.
Yet ere I lose him I will risk my life—
Risk all—except the sacred cause I'm sworn to.

[*Goes out.*

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## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*Isoline's Chamber.*

*Enter* GOVERNOR *and* ISOLINE.

*Gov.* Thus, save the nature of the grievous wrong
Which on my conscience weighs—which to repair
I to Fernando would have wedded thee,
Will wed thee still, comes he to claim thy hand—
Of all have I possess'd thee: who he is;
The mortal enmity his father bears me;

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The public foe join'd to the private one ;
His hatred of our race, love for his own ;
Devotion to the dynasty, held sway
In Sicily ere France supplanted it ;
Hopes to make head again ; efforts, intrigues
With foreign powers to raise up foes to France.
That he whose presence stopp'd the rites to-day,
May act in concert with the Procida,
Though past the scope of probability,
Lies within that of chance ; for, though Fernando
Knows not his parentage, yet accident
May have reveal'd the son to Procida.
View then these nuptials thus. If solemnised,
Joy not without regrets—if frustrated,
Regrets with yet their solaces.

*Iso.* I will, sir.

*Gov.* Do so ; and so good night. Another word.
Set not thy heart on seeing him again ;
He never may return. Or say he should,
Expect him to depart and come no more.
You mark ?

*Iso.* I do, sir.

*Gov.* Now good night again. [*Goes out.*

*Iso.* What, Marguerite !—Come hither, Marguerite.
Hast done it ? [*To* MARGUERITE, *who enters.*]

*Mar.* He is in the oratory.

*Iso.* I thank the holy man. He will remain there ?

*Mar.* Ay, madam.

*Iso.* He was ever good to me.
Fernando will return to-night—I know
He will. My heart doth prophesy he will,
And lovers' hearts a strange foreknowledge have,
Though read they not the stars. That 's he ! Go, look !
[MARGUERITE *goes out.*
O, that this hour were past ! Alas, 'tis thus
We wish us ever nearer to our graves,
With fear of this, and with desire for that,
Flying from one thing, following another,
As rushing from the very thing itself
For which we pray, towards that we pray against !
Knew I the moment—ay, the very moment

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I wedded him—I should be spouse to death,
Away with life! at once he should be mine!

*Enter* MARGUERITE.

*Mar.* 'Tis not Fernando.

*Iso.* Keep upon the watch. [MARGUERITE *goes out.*
He shall be mine! Shall private enmities
On others' parts set bars 'twixt those that love?
Make of two hearts grown one two hearts again
Distinct and alienate? or rather—for
Judging mine own Fernando's heart by mine,
That can't be done—untwine two lives, which love
Has drawn together till they grow like tendrils,
Knotted and interwreathed, that without bruising
You cannot part them—maybe killing them?
It should not be and shall not. Now the chances?
No let can I divine to sway Fernando,
Except that father yet he knows not of,
And whom, new found, new feelings welcoming,
Will at the moment large surrender make,
Haply at cost of love itself! What then!
Love that is steadfast brooks not sacrifice.
It may submit awhile; but, in the end,
It ever claims its own—the paramount
Of all affections! So, his love, at first
O'ercome, anon will vindicate itself.
Whereto no weak retreating, no false shame
On the part of mine, shall offer hindrance to me,
From giving 't all my help.

*Enter* MARGUERITE.

*Mar.* I hear a step.

*Iso.* Go see if it be his. [MARGUERITE *goes out.*] Why
should I blush
To own mine honest love? Is love a thing
To blush for?—Love!—the sacred root of all
The household pure affections, things of truth
And piety next what we owe to Heaven.
Love that makes friendship poor—that mocks enhance-
ment—
Itself possession endless! That 's example

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Of loyalty! Its master better served
Than monarchs on their thrones, his throne himself!
That more abounds in sunshine of content,
Than destiny in clouds to quench the light.
Whole in itself! Love, that is chastity
Of more than vestal perfectness! The world
For choice, yet one with leave of Heaven selecting
And giving all the rest to negligence!
As the refiner the alloy, when once
He finds the extracted gold. He shall be mine!
The maid that 's not stanch stickler for her love
Hath little on't to strive for. She may smile
Scornful good-bye, and turn upon her heel;
Forget and love again; or think she does—
For by the love I feel she knows not love.
My love 's a heap takes all my heart to hold,
As rich as large, and shan't be cast away.

*Re-enter* MARGUERITE.

*Mar.* 'Tis he!—I beckon'd him. He follows me.
*Iso.* Take stand behind the hanging stealthily,
And there keep watch. And ever recollect
You are mine honour's sentinel, and bound
To let thine eye no parley hold with sleep,
So much as e'en a wink. As open as
Your eye, your ear; to note whate'er may pass
And in thy memory to book it down,
And faithfully; for, on some syllable
May something hang, which in esteem I hold
Next to my soul's salvation. Quick! He comes.

[MARGUERITE *hides*—FERNANDO *enters.*]

*Iso.* [*after a pause*]. Fernando, art thou there?
*Fern.* Ay, Isoline.
*Iso.* Art thou indeed?
*Fern.* I am.
*Iso.* I note thee speak,
Yet can't believe thee there.
*Fern.* Why?
*Iso.* Why, Fernando?
If but the morning, noon, or afternoon,

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Withheld thee from me, when thou camest again,
Thine eyes did dance, thy breath grew scant, thy cheek
Did change its blood for frost, and I was met
Like new-found, wondrous treasure. Yesterday
It had been so.—What hath befallen to-day
To make it look so utterly unlike
Its happy fellow? Dost not joy, Fernando,
To see me?

*Fern.* Joy!—Ay, as the mariner
To see the day o'erta'en by storm at night,
But knows 'tis vain, his vessel foundering!

*Iso.* Explain thy speech, my love.

*Fern.* He was a friend
Who took me hence; a most dear friend, although
One that I wot not of until to-day,—
None other than a father, Isoline!

*Iso.* Thou hast found a father?

*Fern.* I have found a father;
And with that father I have held such converse
As hath transform'd me so, except my love
I should not know myself; and being thus
Dissimilar to him this morning was
Thy bridegroom, from this night that should have been
Our bridal-night, all days and nights to come
Am nothing to thee thou mayst name, except
A merchant sailor for his argosie,
That holds possession of the rock whereon
She struck and went to pieces!

*Iso.* We must part!
Lovest thou me still, Fernando?

*Fern.* Yes!

*Iso.* As ever?

*Fern.* As ever!

*Iso.* Then, we do not part, my friend!

*Fern.* Is't Isoline that speaks?

*Iso.* Yes! Isoline!
The very maid thou know'st so call'd—a maid,
So chary of her virgin sanctity,
Thee, her betroth'd—thee, her almost espoused,
She challenges to tell the moment only
She gave thee licence, she would bar thee name,

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Or blush to hear thee do so. Lo, the strait
She is in!—at such an hour—in such a place
To parley with thee, and the argument
Her grievance—thy default—default in love!
In love, Fernando! thy default in that
Wherein that she fell short was the reproach
Thou still didst urge against her, to the day
The very hour she gave thee slow consent
To lead her to the priest.

*Fern.* Heaven witness!

*Iso.* Peace!

No words—save such as make reply to questions.
We part—why? Lies the reason at my door?
Am I to blame? Then fit we part. If not,
It is not fit! I have no right to suffer.
Suffer, Fernando!—Did you hear me?—Heavens!
The boon, with showers of tears and gusts of sighs
You won from me, I call it suffering,
To find you would not take! But I'm a woman,
Strong in the faculty your nobler sex
Advance large claims to, with most poor pretensions—
*Once cleaving, cleaving still.* We shall not part,
You think to leave me. Try! The cement, that
Becomes a portion of the thing it joins,
So that as soon you tear themselves apart
As them from it, not more tenaciously
Keeps hold than I! Piecemeal, they may disjoin us,
But perfect, never!

*Fern.* Isoline!

*Iso.* Fernando!

When I consented to become thy wife,
I gave myself to thee. A thousand rites
Not more had made me thine. I was thy wife
That very hour—that very minute! All
Ties of reserves, heeds, other interests,
That held my heart from thee I snapp'd at once,
And like a woman gave it thee entire!
Whole and for ever!—ay, so gave it thee,
Were I and all my race in slavery,
And it the ransom, which, on paying down,
The shackles would fall off—gall as they might,

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They must remain. I could not take it back,
Not even if I would.

*Fern.* Nay, Isoline!

*Iso.* Nay, hear me out, Fernando. There is a ward
By nature set o'er the true woman's heart
Undream'd of by thy sex, except the few
Of the true manhood, that contemplate them
With delicate regards. Without that ward
Woman is won and lost, and lost and won,
As oft we see; but, with it, won—lost never;
Though won unworthily—a contradiction,
Yet proof of her pure nature! which, it seems,
Falls to thy lot to test. You are here to take
The oath, I vow'd to take along with thee.

*Fern.* I cannot take it.

*Iso.* Cannot! You have a voice
And organs apt to frame it into speech,
Most pliant ones, as I can testify!

*Fern.* I may not take it.

*Iso.* May not! What are you?
What are you, sir! a ward, or a free man
Acting his part upon his own account—
Upon his own responsibility?

*Fern.* I may not for thy sake.

*Iso.* For my sake, sir!
The sand of the very hour you gave me leave
To look to myself, is running still!—not half,
Nor quarter out! For shame, to wrong me first,
And then to mock me!

*Fern.* I must take an oath—

*Iso.* When?—where?—to whom? No matter! You did vow
To me before to take an oath—and shalt,
And judge me worthily as you're a man!
But that I have a title to thy hand—
But that 'tis mine, upon the warranty
Of Earth and Heaven, that heard thee say 'twas mine—
Brought it the wealth and power of all the thrones
That glitter on the earth, and I could have it
By only asking for it—ere I could speak



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The word, I'd choke, blacken before thee, fall
A corpse at thy feet!
*Fern.* Now let me speak! To wed thee
Is wedding thee to misery!
*Iso.* Content;
I will wed misery.
*Fern.* My Isoline,
Thou wouldst ally thee to a house, the foe
Of thee and all thy race!
*Iso.* Unto that house
Will I ally myself.
*Fern.* The consequences!
*Iso.* Be they the worst I am prepared for them.
I'll take them all on mine own head.
*Fern.* The strife that 's sure to come!—Man as I am, my soul
Sickens to think on't.
*Iso.* Woman as I am,
I dare it to come on.
*Fern.* Rivers of blood
Will flow!
*Iso.* They are welcome, though my veins be breathed
To help the flood.—Redeem your promise, sir!
*Fern.* O, Isoline! By this dear hand—
*Iso.* Hold off!
In the relation wherein now we stand,
I will not suffer even touch from thee!
Nor shalt thou trifle with me—for to speak
Or act, save to the point, is only trifling.
Here—in the oratory close at hand
Attends the holy man, whose offices
This morning we did crave and then forego.
Follow me to him. Take my hand before him;
Plight with me troth for troth. Or here remain
Till night gives up her watch to day, and then,
Departing hence, to crown thy bounty, leave me
A spotless maiden with a blasted name!
*Fern.* Thou couldst not dream of such perdition, and
To bring it on thyself!
*Iso.* Men cannot dream

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What desperate things a desperate woman dreams,
Until they see her act them!
*Fern.* Desperate!
*Iso.* Yes, desperate! Sweet patience! Men go mad
To lose their hoards of pelf, when hoards as rich
With industry may come in time again!
Yet they go mad—it happens every day.
Have not some slain themselves? Yet if a maid—
Who finds that she has nothing garner'd up
Where she believed she had a heart in store
For one she gave away—is desperate,
You marvel at her! Marvel! When the mines
Of all the earth are poor as beggary
To make her rich again! Am I ashamed
To tell thee this?—No!—Save the love we pay
To Heaven, none purer, holier, than that
A virtuous woman feels for him she'd cleave
Through life to. Sisters part from sisters—brothers
From brothers—children from their parents—but
Such woman from the husband of her choice
Never!—Give me the troth you promised me.
*Fern.* Never didst thou reflect that I was born
In Sicily?
*Iso.* I know thou 'rt a Sicilian.
*Fern.* Didst ne'er reflect upon it?
*Iso.* To what end
Should I reflect?
*Fern.* To spurn me as a man
Devoid of honour!
*Iso.* Who dares call thee so?
*Fern.* He who dares speak the truth. Thou know'st
—thou must—
The wrongs my country suffers!
*Iso.* Yes: I know
She suffers wrongs. I have wept for them, Fernando.
*Fern.* Have you?—Have you wept for them? I
have heard them
Without a tear! Am I a man of honour?
*Iso.* What good were it to weep?
*Fern.* None—but to feel
As you could weep—and then, with manlier thought,



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Let fiery revenge instead of pity
Start into your eye and look the wronger dead!
That—that were good. It were becoming, too,
In one who owes his birth to Sicily.
I have not done so! O, I have play'd a part
Most mean and spiritless! Have proffer'd smiles
Where it behoved me to hurl frowns! exchanged
Kind speech for curses, and grip'd hands with men,
With whom, had I clash'd daggers, I had done
The proper thing! What must men think of me?
Is there a lip I know, which, did it speak
The heart of the owner, would not curl at me?
O, God! to be despised! regarded as
A thing, the man who understood himself
Would use his foot to! To despise one's self!
That's it! The scorn of all the world beside
I could endure, had I mine own content.
But that is lost. No man can call me worse
Than I do know myself.

*Iso.* Fernando—

*Fern.* Nay!
Suffer me speak, for it relieves my heart!
And as you love me—which I know you do—
Do not gainsay me! I am a wretch more fit
To die than live!—and yet not fit to die!
For of all sins that on their heads men bear,
The heaviest, because the instrument
Of widest injury, are those which they
Commit against their country. I am fit
For nothing but a beacon to point out
The rock whereon my honour suffer'd wreck
That other men's may 'scape it.

*Iso.* Was that rock
Thy love for me?

*Fern.* Love?—Love?—What do I know
Of love? Where is the love I ought to bear
My country? Love?—It is a holy passion!
Generous!—exalted!—with integrity,
Lasting as adamant!—He can know nothing
Of love like that who does not love his country!

*Iso.* Lov'st thou not me?

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*Fern.* Old Angelo Martini!
*Iso.* Lov'st thou not me?
*Fern.* Angelo, my old master,
Who taught me how to guard a life, and take one,
Was murder'd yesterday, because he slew
A miscreant—the foulest in the list
Of Infamy's pernicious sons! Was hunted
Like a wild beast that 's from a thicket sprung
By dogs, and chased for sport! I might have saved him,
And didn't!—Why?—Because my heart was rotten!
I owed him manly knowledge—kindness—love.
He loved me as his son. I suffer'd them
To hunt him!—worry him to death! I did.
Am I a man at all?
*Iso.* Lovest thou not me?
*Fern.* Ay, Isoline, as much
As such a wretch can love!—Love thee?—I do,
And holily—if holy thing can dwell
In most unhallow'd habitation. Love thee?
How dare I love thee? Temple as thou art
Of tenderness, of chastity, and truth;
Truth most ingenuous! Is it thy arms
I should aspire to?—Thine, my Isoline!
Whose foot ne'er spurn'd from thee a thing so base
As that which now, in utter misery,
I cast before it. [*Dashing himself upon the ground.*
*Iso.* Rise, Fernando, rise,
My lord—my love! What has afflicted thee
To this severe extremity? Fernando!
Thou scarest me! This passion hath no reason!
'Tis wantonness of frenzy!—Dost thou hear me?
If not thyself, dear love—consider me!
That 's right!—that 's kind!—Give me thy hand and rise.
I dream'd not this. Thank Heaven you 're calmer! O
I thought I loved thee all that I could love,
But now I find my love, disdaining bounds,
Is endless and unfathomable. Now
I find I loved thee but a little, and
With that remain'd contented; never dreaming

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How misery endears, and what a heap
Of love was yet to come in company
With thy affliction. What shall I do for thee?
I am thy bane!—a blight—a canker to thee!
Shall I die? [*Plucks a dagger from his girdle.*

*Fern.* Hold!—Stop!—Nay let my dagger go!

*Iso.* You have grip'd hands, you said, with those with whom
You ought to have clash'd daggers, and 'twas done
For me!—Don't hurt me, dear Fernando! There!
[*Lets go the dagger.*

*Fern.* Are you mad?

*Iso.* No!—Calm as you are—you shall see.
[*Goes to the door and throws it open.*
The door is free!—The first, the last embrace!
And go!

*Fern.* Part?—Never! Thou art in my arms!
Be this embrace the knot unites us ever!
Come woe!—come death!—come every kind of bane!
Thou pattern of devotion! Thou true woman!
Thou ruby worth a mine, and fitly set!
Which is the way?—Where bides the holy man?
Is that the portal to the oratory?
What means thy cheek by dropping on my breast?
Does it say "Yes?"—Hold up, mine own dear love,
And come along. We'll kneel to Heaven to-night,
And trust to it for to-morrow.—Come, love, come.
[*They go out.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*A Chamber in the Castle.*

*Enter* LE CLERC *and* FRANCOIS.

*Fran.* I never saw a feast resembled it!

*Le Clerc.* Like a mourning, sir, where people wake
The dead; and to my thought, the bridegroom was
The corse; the body whence the soul had fled;
And whereupon the bride look'd vacantly

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Like widow at her husband on a bier,
In whose deep woe the signs are swallow'd up,
While those around look on and show they grieve!
*Fran.* When were their nuptials solemnized?
*Le Clerc.* Last night,
And very privately. You did not know—
You are but new arrived from Syracuse?
*Fran.* Only in time to see the festival,
If I may call it so, in honour of them.
*Le Clerc.* You know not then their nuptials were appointed
For yesterday—were on the very eve
Of taking place; nor what prevented them?
*Fran.* No.
*Le Clerc.* This way, then, and I will tell you. Here
Are company might interrupt us. Come! [*They go out.*

*Enter* MARTEL *and* AMBROSE.

*Mar.* Abstraction of that hue ne'er saw I yet
In one so high in favour with good fortune!
Excess of happiness, like that of grief,
Will palsy feeling, till the owner seems not
To know how hugely blest he is; but still
Some token shows the nature of the lapse.
Here, none. Within the table's breadth of him
I sat, and mark'd him. 'Twas not feasting, sir;
He seem'd as he were jealous of the viands,
Like one upon his guard 'gainst poison'd meats.
He did not eat, but taste; while, at his side,
His bride—whose eyes, purveyors never weary
Of catering for their lord, did range and range
The table over, to select for him
Whate'er was daintiest—with busy lips,
Like pages who their errands blushing tell,
Did ever and anon commend to him
The well-selected cheer, but all in vain.
*Amb.* I craved his leave to pledge him in a cup.
He took the cup; but, straight its use forgetting,
Began to pore upon the rich contents:
Then, as a thing one does mechanically,
Raising it to his lip, without the due

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And custom'd courtesy, he quaff'd it off
And set it down again.
*Mar.* Remark'd you not
How strainingly he fix'd upon the door
His eyes, whene'er it chanced to open, as
He look'd for one to enter, he had rather
Should keep away?
*Amb.* That struck me very much,
And brought to mind the unwelcome visitor,
Broke in upon his nuptials yesterday.
*Mar.* So was't with me. For him, or some one like him,
Be sure he look'd, with more of certainty
Than doubt.——The bride and bridegroom, and alone!
Let us withdraw nor mar their privacy. [*They go out.*

*Enter* FERNANDO *and* ISOLINE.

*Fern.* You are right, my love; the grape is generous,
And, used in the wise proportion, cheers the heart.
*Iso.* You are better!—are you not?
*Fern.* Much!—very much!
*Iso.* O, blessed union that of two makes one!
Could I, dear love, have bought the world just now
By paying down for it one hearty smile,
I must have lost the bargain, seeing thee
Without one! It was otherwise before!
How often have I smiled at that same want!
But, now, comes o'er your looks the slightest cloud,
All light of mine is gone.—Fernando!—Love!
Is it not sweetest partnery?
*Fern.* It is.
*Iso.* It is, indeed, my love! Say as I do!
It is, indeed, most sweet!
*Fern.* Indeed it is.
Was't not the castle portal open'd now?
I know its ponderous sound! 'Tis shut again!
Yes, it was it!
*Iso.* Whom look you for, dear love?
All your good spirits gone?
*Fern.* No, Isoline;
Not all of them!—not half!—not any of them!

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We'll spend the evening joyously, dear love!
Out-do the god of merriment himself;
And when he 's out of laughter lend him some
And still ourselves hold on! Who 's there?

*Enter* EUGENE *and* Others.

*Eug.* My lord,
We are passing to the ball-room.
*Fern.* Pray pass on.
And keep the measure up!
*Eug.* We will, my lord. [*Going out with others.*
*Fern.* That 's right; and so will I!
*Iso.* So do, dear love!
For me!—Your Isoline!—your bride!—your wife!—
*Fern.* You are my wife!—The treasure of my heart
Is treasure of my arms! Who is rich as I,
And says he is not happy? Then is he
Beyond the ministering of content,
And be despair his portion! I am not
A man like that.
*Iso.* My love, this cheer makes sad.
*Fern.* Makes sad?
*Iso.* It is not of the kind gives cheer.
It wants a quiet.
*Fern.* Wants a quiet?—Here
Lay on my brow this white and velvet hand
Thou gavest me yesterday.
*Iso.* It burns, dear love;
And yet how pale it is!
*Fern.* I have seen a man
In fever—he did burn, and yet was pale—
Pale as a corpse.
*Iso.* Thou hast no fever?
*Fern.* No.
The cup has pass'd too often to my lips—
Not much—only a time or two!—What proves
A spark to one, another finds a fire.
Don't heed it, dearest life!—Heaven, what a hand!
Were it ethereal, yet were given to sense,
What could be spared of it, or added to it?



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Shape?—No! Hue?—No! Touch?—No! Does it
breathe? It does!
The airs of Heaven! I will inhale them nearer!
[*Kissing her hand.*

*Iso.* You flatter, dearest lord!

*Fern.* No, by my love.

*Iso.* Yea, by your love, indeed, dear lord, you do!
You are a culprit, who for witness calls
The arch accomplice that would swear him off.

*Fern.* By all—[LOUIS *enters.*] Ha!—'Sdeath, you
tread on tiptoe, sir,
You are at my elbow ere I think you there!

*Louis.* Your pardon! I was musing, sir, and thus
Moved slow. 'Tis strange! but in the ball-room, now,
One cross'd me in a mask, and made me start,
By something in his carriage and his form
Resembling one I must have met, but where
I cannot recollect. Whoe'er it was,
A fearful feeling that cross'd o'er my heart
Assures me 'twas no friend.

*Fern.* What? Seem'd he old
Or young?

*Louis.* Men's figures do not tell their years
Well as their faces do; yet would I say,
Guessing thereby his progress on life's road,
He was more near the end than setting out.

*Fern.* Commanding in his air?

*Louis.* Very.

*Fern.* His gait
Of most assured tread?

*Louis.* As he did spurn
The ground he walk'd on. He and I have met,
But when, or where, or upon what occasion,
I can't recal, nor rest until I do.
Farewell, and pardon me. 'Tis very strange! [*Goes out.*

*Iso.* [*to* FERNANDO, *who is lost in thought*]. Dear
husband, what is it possesses you?

*Fern.* Nothing!

*Iso.* O, love, be honest!—It is best
Always.—If evil comes of it, at worst
We have been honest—that will comfort us.

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Come!—I will show you, what I teach, I do.
I don't believe our union will be blest.
You start!—and you yourself did tell me so,
And now I tell it you!—I don't believe it.
What then?—Do I repent our union? No!
My heart has had its wish—I am thy wife.
Knew I that I should die the very moment
The priest should bless us and declare us one,
I had married thee and yielded up my spirit,
Thanking the gracious Heavens, most bountiful,
Which for that little moment made thee mine.
Then cheer thee, love; and be assured of this—
Were we to live the three-score years and ten,
And then to die, being what now we are,
We could not die more happy. Lose not *now*
With care for *by-and-by*, whate'er may come;
But leave 't with trust to Heaven!

*Fern.* I'll do thy will!
I'll be myself!—The ball-room!—Come, love, come!

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## SCENE II.—*A Ball-Room.*

FERNANDO, ISOLINE, *and* Others *discovered,—A Dance.*

*Fern.* Surely the lightsomest, most graceful form,
And act of merriment! I'd give the world
To have the mood of him who danced just now.
How he did seem to poise him in the air,
As he could hang there at his will, by which
Alone he seem'd to come to earth again!
He did not spring, but fly from step to step!
With joints that had not free-er play'd, methinks,
Were hinges made of air and theirs were such!
Yet could they plant themselves, I warrant me,
To meet a shock! These spirits are fine things,
Subtle as quicksilver; only they freeze
Sooner than water; one cold breath, and ice!

*Iso.* Will you not dance?

*Fern.* No.

*Iso.* 'Tis expected, love,
Upon your nuptial day.

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*Fern.* I would not dance.

*Iso.* No more would I, dear love, to please myself;
But we must help the mirth that's made for us,
And else will flag, and die. A feast, in this,
Is like a fray, wherein the side is lost
Whose leader is not foremost, cheering it.
For my sake only! I must bear the blame
Seem you to lack content. They will believe
You do repent you of your bargain, love.
Would you like that?—What had you done a month
Ago, had I refused to dance with you?
How had you look'd as all the world were lost:
Urged me again—again; at every turn
Your voice yet more attuning to the tone
That melts; invoking me in the dear name
Of pity and whate'er is kin to her.
I had heard, in these things, marriage turns the tables,
And she that once was woo'd must come to woo,
But little dream'd to find it out so soon.

*Fern.* Sweet love, we'll dance! Thy fair hand give to me,
And, with it, give thy pardon.

*Iso.* There, Fernando.
A set!—a set!—The bride and bridegroom's set!
Partners!—Your fair friends, gentlemen—a set
To try the breath!—Ho, music there!—a strain
Of brilliant figure!

[PROCIDA *in the dress of a cavalier, and masked, appears opposite to* FERNANDO, *who at once recognises him.*]

*Mar.* Hear you, sirs? The bride
Commands the dance—your very newest strain,
So 'tis the choicest, too. We are ready, madam.
So please you take your place.

*Iso.* Fernando, what 's
The matter!—Who is he you gaze upon?
Do you know him?

*Fern.* Don't you recollect him?

*Iso.* No—
Not in that mask. Who is he?

*Fern.* Never mind.

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*Iso.* His presence troubles you! Whoe'er he is
I'll have him straight removed.
*Fern.* Not for the world?
He wants me!
*Iso.* Let him wait till by-and-by!
I'll speak to him myself and pray him go,
And come some other time.
*Fern.* Stay, Isoline!
I would not for a mine thou spokest to him!
I'll speak to him myself!
*Iso.* Remember, love,
The dance is waiting.
*Fern.* Were't a King that waited,
He must, until I spoke to him that's yonder!
Where can I take him to?—to be alone?
*Iso.* The garden.
*Fern.* Right! When we have made an end,
By the west door he can depart unseen.
*Iso.* O, husband!
*Fern.* Let me have my way in this,
For I must! Look, love! Not surer to thy wrist
Is knit thy hand than I am knit to thee!
They cannot sever us, but I must perish!
So now, no let, love, if you value me!
*Iso.* Our friends, who look for us—
*Fern.* He looks for me!
Women, they say, are at invention quick—
Prove it so now, and never more be need;
And be my sweet apologist. [*Crosses to* PROCIDA.
Say naught,
But follow me!

[PROCIDA *and* FERNANDO *disappear among the Company.*

*Iso.* Your pardon, friends, I pray you.
One, in some case of keenest urgency,
That needs my husband's presence, takes him hence.
Pray you proceed. I'll play the looker-on
'Till he repairs his fault to you and me,
Taking his promised place. The music, there!

*A Dance.*

*Louis* [*entering hastily*]. Break off the dance!—an enemy is here!

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Lady, I have recall'd the name of him
Whose presence struck me so unwelcomely—
A foe, the subtlest and most powerful
That France could find in Sicily! When lately
On mission from the King I did sojourn
At the court of Spain, came thither a Sicilian
With charges foul 'gainst France, and praying aid
To second some great blow, he said, the friends
Of Sicily did meditate. That man
Was he whose form came o'er my spirits like
An apparition, even now—his name
Is John di Procida! I have alarm'd
The guard; apprised your father of his danger,
And search is now on foot which all must join.

[*The Company at once disperse in various directions—occasionally passing to and fro in the Back Ground.*

*Iso.* Ambrose!—Le Clerc! Sirs, you are men of honour.
You know me, too, a woman of that kin.
You'll do my bidding, whatsoe'er it is?

*Amb.* & *Le Clerc.* Yes; by these tokens.

[*Kissing the hilts of their swords.*

*Iso.* Good sirs, follow me! [*They go out.*

## SCENE III.—*The Garden of the Castle.*

*Enter* PROCIDA *and* FERNANDO.

*Fern.* Now, sir, your will with me?

*Pro.* That 's right! I am glad
Thou darest not call me father! 'Tis a sign
Thou hast a sense of shame, and that 's a virtue,
Although a poor one, fitter far to weep at
Than smile at. You have done your father's will?
You are ready for that oath?

*Fern.* I'll not deny
My disobedience, sir.

*Pro.* You'll not deny?
You can't!—You have married her! Yet, if my son,
Though in the one engagement thou hast fail'd,
Thou yet wilt keep the other.

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*Fern.* Take that oath ?
I cannot now !
*Pro.* You can !—You ought !—You shall !
*Fern.* I am a man, sir !
*Pro.* Ay ? What kind of one ?
*Fern.* Maybe a weak one ; yet I dare abide
The issue of my weakness, and I will.
Not breaking trust with those it has misled
To knit their fates to mine.
*Pro.* You call this manhood ?
Ay, in a man not worth the name of one !
How darest thou prate of keeping trust to me,
With whom thou hast so vilely broken trust ?
So lately, too ! Thou promisedst yesterday
Bring back a son to me ! Where is he, sir ?
Why must I come to seek him, and, instead,
Behold a recreant !
*Fern.* Better, sir, we part,
Than hold discourse on terms unequal thus,
That I must bear alone, and you inflict.
*Pro.* No ! We won't part ! You come along with me !
*Fern.* Never !
*Pro.* As you 're my son I'll have it so !
*Fern.* I'll not forsake the woman of my soul,
Who to my bosom hath herself surrendered.
Come woe ! Come shame ! Come ruin ! True to me,
I'll not forsake her ! Yea, come death, I'll clasp her
Long as my breast doth heave !
*Pro.* You think this manhood
Again ? Sir ! 'tis not what a man dares do,
Nor what's expected from him by a man,
But what Heaven orders him to do,—'tis that
He should do. Heaven expects we keep its laws ;
May we make league then with the foes of Heaven ?
Or having made it, may we keep it. No !—
Else we shall forfeit Heaven ! This base alliance
Is even such a league. Break it !
*Fern.* No !
*Pro.* No ?—
Listen, degenerate boy ! I'll tell thee that,
In tearing which from me thou dost as bad

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As though my breast thou didst rip open, and
Pluck out my heart alive! You never knew
A mother?

*Fern.* I remember there was one,
Upon whose breast I used to lie.

*Pro.* 'Twas she.
She had a mother's breast—the heart within
Becoming its fair lodge—adorning it
With all the sweet affections of her sex,
And holy virtues that keep watch for them!
Thou art like her! Dost thou mark? Thou art like her now;
And so, I saw thou wast, upon her lap;
A little baby looking up at her!
Thou wast her first child, and her only one!
Thou mayst believe she loved thee!

*Fern.* Does she live?

*Pro.* No; did she live, I were not now, perhaps,
Debating with thee. Thou hadst granted her
What thou deniest me. Wouldst thou behold her?
Look here! Was that a woman!

[*Drawing a miniature from his breast.*

*Fern.* Heavens! how fair!

*Pro.* Was that a woman?

*Fern.* Yes!

*Pro.* No, boy! She was
An angel! [*Putting up the miniature.*

*Fern.* Let me look again!

[PROCIDA *holds it to* FERNANDO, *who takes it, and after looking at it is about to kiss it.*

*Pro.* Forbear!
Thou shalt not kiss it! No, nor breathe upon it!
There is contact on thy lips, at thought of which,
Had she survived the ruin of my hold,
And now were living, that sweet face, thou seest
The limning of, had to the 'haviour turn'd
Of deadly loathing!—of black horror!—aught
That's removed farthest from that smile of Heaven!
Had any mock'd that face, what were he to thee?

*Fern.* An enemy!

*Pro.* Had any smitten it?

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*Fern.* I had lopp'd his hand off, and then smitten him
To the heart!
*Pro.* Had any brought the blush upon it—
The burning blush which innocence endures,
Compell'd by him who does a deed so damn'd
That murder spurns it, will not bide with it?
*Fern.* I had hack'd him limb from limb!—slain him by inches!
*Pro.* Thou hadst!
*Fern.* I had!
*Pro.* Back to the castle, then;
To the room I brought thee from, the festal room,
Where for thy nuptials they keep holiday,
And when thou meet'st the master of the mirth,
The Governor—the father of thy wife—
Him thou art now a son to—tell him—mark me!
Tell him—that very—that identical man—
He was the miscreant, to thy mother did
That very shame!—then nerve thy filial arm,
And hack him limb by limb and inch by inch,
As though in every atom lay the heart
Of the accursed spoiler.—Go!—Do that,
And then come back; and kiss thy mother's face!
*Fern.* I hear and doubt I hear.
*Pro.* Then list again,
And doubt no more. 'Twas during a brief truce.
He was my guest—a guest's a sacred thing;
But, if he is, a host is sacred too.
My wife with me did minister to him
The rites of hospitality—and what
Was the return?—such love indulged for her,
As meditated bane of life to me!
He did not dare to breathe it—he but look'd it!
She saw what troubled her, and, like a wife
Perfect in honour—of herself best guardian—
At once refused her presence on some plea
That warded chance of quarrel, while it balk'd
Licentiousness of opportunity.
This when the truce was ended, she did tell me.
Dost thou breathe thick?—I do, and must take breath,

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For what 's to come  You listen, do you not?
You look like stone!
*Fern.* I know not what I am!
*Pro.* Well!—War again.—Where was your father?
—Where
Behoves a loyal subject be—in the ranks
Of the king when he takes the field.—You know we lost
The day. Palermo, Syracuse, Messina,
All bent the knee to the conqueror. Was I
His subject? No!—Was I a rebel to him?
No!—Why then should I be proscribed?
*Fern.* Proscribed!
*Pro.* I was so!—Keep thy wonder! What's behind
Will want it. Through the arts of that same man—
Of him thou now art knit up with through thy union
With his pernicious child—was thy own father
Proscribed. Have patience! His possessions cast
At the feet of a licentious soldiery
To scramble for and ravage.
*Fern* Infamy!
*Pro.* I say again have patience. "Infamy!"
No, not at all—not worth a passing frown.
The deed 's to come. My castle did remain;
That, the arch-spoiler to himself reserved
For plunder—for thy mother shelter'd there!
She was the quarry which this bird of prey
Had mark'd out for his pounce—which, when he saw
'Twas sure, he made!—swept down with ruthless wing,
When none was near to cleave him ere he struck,
Or scare him from his prey! Do you hear a shriek?
*Fern.* Sir?
*Pro.* Do you hear a shriek?
*Fern.* No.
*Pro.* Are you sure?
*Fern.* I am; for never do I hear a shriek
But my heart leaps as through my breast 'twould burst
Its way! I cannot bear to hear a shriek!
*Pro.* Thou heard'st thy mother's! as the ravisher
Waved o'er thy head his coward blade, through terror
At thy impending death, to win from her,
What, sooner than yield up, she had lost herself

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A hundred thousand lives!—She swoon'd away!
My heart turns sick, and my brain reels! Thy arm!—
Away! thou worse than matricide—thy touch
With a new horror strings my nerves anew!

*Fern.* Why was this tale reserved?—not told before?

*Pro.* Because I found thee apt, as I believed,
In taking up the hint of honour; nor
Admitted fear it could be thrown away.
Life 's strong in me to tell the tale and live!
How she contrived escape, to tell it me,
It matters not—the last word cost her dear—
'Twas bought with her last breath.—You come with me?

*Fern.* I am a doomed man!—My lot, on earth,
Is cast in utter misery!—For me,
Not in the wide world blooms that blessed spot
I can find comfort in!

*Pro.* Find Duty, boy;
And take thy chance for comfort.

*Fern.* I can't leave her!
Do wrong to her did ever good to me!
I took her for all chance, and through all chance
I'll cleave to her. In cloud I wedded her,
And thunder shall not scare me from her now!
No blame is hers.—I swear that she is good.
Loves holily as heartily. Is a gem
Of crystal truth—a mine of every ore
Of excellence—a paragon of worth,
Well as a paragon of loveliness.
Is she her father's hand or foot, that you
Or I should spurn her for her father's fault?
High Heaven did frame her, as it frames us all,
Not of the temper of our parentage,
But of the attributes itself vouchsafes us.
Heaven framed her to be loved—if to be loved,
Then, cherish'd!—I have sworn to cherish her—
I'll keep my oath!—I will not give her up.

*Pro.* Then, must I leave thee to thy fate!

*Iso.* [*entering*]. Stop, sir!
You are John of Procida!

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*Pro.* I am.
*Iso.* The foe
Of France; and, chiefly, of a son of hers
Who calls me child.
*Pro.* I am the foe of France,
And chiefly foe of him thou speakest of.
*Iso.* What madness brought thee hither?
*Pro.* Madness?—Right!
Hope of reclaiming a degenerate son,
Spell-bound by love where it behoves him loathe!
*Iso.* Your life's in jeopardy!—You are discover'd!
Come in there!—Gentlemen, you'll guard him safely.
And suffer none to question him or touch him;
Nor must you leave him till he is thoroughly
Beyond the reach of danger.
*Pro.* Gracious Powers!
Do you rebuke me thus?—is't thus you show it?
*Iso.* You are my enemy—and yet my father!
Father to him—to me a dearer self.
I'll answer with my life, sir, for the safety
Of every hair of your head.
*Pro.* Fernando!
*Fern.* Sir?
*Pro.* Come hither!—Lady, place your hand in mine.
These hands that met, till now, against my will,
Now, with my will, I join, and add thereto
My blessing!—May I, Heaven?—I ask too late!
'Tis done!—A promise, lady!
*Iso.* It is given!
*Pro.* See that it be fulfill'd. You will repair
To-night, ere at the zenith stops the moon,
There, westward of Messina, on the coast,
Where, when the waves and winds are boisterous,
The fishermen their little fleets embay,
And, in their snug huts nestling at their ease,
Smile and grow jocund at the storm without.
You know the place?
*Iso.* I do—I will be there!
*Pro.* And so will I—and you shall find a friend!
[*They go out severally.*

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## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Bay near Messina.—The Sea.—Fishermen's Boats; in the offing a Fleet.—Moonlight.*

*Enter* JOHN OF PROCIDA *and* GUISCARDO.

*Pro.* You look your news! 'Tis dire, but not unwelcome,
Nor out of place nor out of season, that
Men should cry "God forbid!"—That is, good men.
It is the scourging, at report of which,
Men that rely on Heaven, upon their breasts
Do cross their arms and, shuddering, look up,
In dread, yet gratitude. Chance has outdone
Foresight; and preparation, looking on
With idle hands, can scarce believe its eyes
To see the work it labour'd for fulfill'd
Almost without its aid. Tell me again
The cause and manner of the massacre;
And leisurely. What you related now
Seems like a dream, which he that has awaked from 't
Tries to recal, but finds the substance vapour,
Which in the tracing of it—vanishes!
You said, the hour of the vespers?

*Guis.* Yes; that hour,
That annual hour religiously observed
In Sicily, our tyrants made a plea
For new and worse aggression. On pretence
Our act of piety might mask revolt,
Assembling in such numbers; though we held
Our warrants in our hands, our wives and children,
Which, who that loved them, would to strokes expose
From swords and knives in sudden tumult drawn,
Where rage might miss a foe and smite a friend?

*Pro.* Well, upon this pretence, orders, you said,
Were pass'd to search for arms—

*Guis.* O Heaven, the acts
Of an unbridled soldiery—of men

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Who reckon war a game—regarding all
The charities—the tender charities
Of human life—as stakes !—Interpreting
This order by the hint of most depraved
And devilish appetite, the myrmidons
Of France presented to amazed Palermo,
O'er-acted in her streets, exposure, which
Her liberal haunts keep close—attested by
The shrieks of maids and matrons, powerless
With loathing and affright ; whose friends look'd on,
Aghast with rage that knew not where to turn.

*Pro.* Go on !—I see it !

*Guis.* Know you one Venoni,
The son of Nicolo Venoni ?

*Pro.* No ;
But knew his father well.

*Guis.* He married lately,
And his young bride, accompanying him
To church, was thus encounter'd. Now, Venoni,
That kind of spirit is endow'd with, which,
If once 'tis chafed, serves its own impulse solely,
Reckless of cost. As a high-temper'd horse
That 's rashly given the spur, throws off all guidance
Save that of its own fury ; spikes itself
Upon a palisade, plunges into
A flood, or dashes o'er a precipice
As soon as keep the road. With naked hand
He struck the caitiff down !

*Pro.* 'Twas like the son
Of his father !—'Twas well done !

*Guis.* How one brave man
Showing himself will make a thousand brave
That play'd the hound before ! The miscreant
At once was stoned to death. His fellows, seeing,
For the first time, how, more from habitude
Than proper power, a handful sways a crowd,
To save themselves took straight to flight. And now
The uproar !—While the guard did beat to arms,
The citizens, the women and their fry
Huddling into their houses, without heed
Whether their own or neighbours', and, as freely,

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Such weapons snapping up as came to hand,
Trebled in numbers from the rousing cry
Of the exploit, which ran like wildfire through
The city, shouting for Enfranchisement,
Vengeance, and Freedom, towards the citadel,
Devoted, moved—one street of waving blades!
*Pro.* The sight did slay their enemies!
*Guis.* It did!
*Pro.* No monster half so dire as that which meets
The eye of tyranny, when it beholds
Its thralls make stand against it all at once,
While at its foot it thought them! They o'erthrew
The garrison?
*Guis.* O'erthrew?—Ay, did they, sir,
As the red flood of Etna would a wall
With touching it. Then came the Massacre,
'Mid yells for quarter, answer'd by despair.
The strugglings then— the blows—the kinds of death!
Some falling by a single stroke, and some
By none at all but grasp of strangling horror.
By pieces some despatch'd—gash upon gash—
Their bodies hack'd, yet life without a wound.
How variously they met their fate—some mad,
Some as all sense were lapsed, some seeking it—
Some flying from it; and with all the signs
As the blood works in such extremity!
Some, pale as ashes; some, with face on fire;
Some, black as though with premature congealing!
Here tears; there scowls; there laughter—yes, I saw
Some that did die with laughter! Some did groan
And some did shriek. Most died with curses. Few
With prayers, and they were mix'd with imprecations.
Not one encounter'd death with constancy,
But all as to its pangs were superadded
The sharper stings of conscience.
*Pro.* Mercy, Heaven,
Upon their souls!
*Guis.* Their wives and children, now——
*Pro.* Don't tell me that again! I shudder still!
The work of slaughter should have stopp'd at them.
Woman and infancy have Nature's word

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Against the blows of men whom she made strong
For their protection. It is damage done
Irreparable to a righteous cause,
Which, else, all men contemporary with it,
As well as all to come had wholly lauded.
It is a glorious page in history,
So blotted, men will say of it, hereafter,
As well as now, "Better it ne'er were written!"

*Guis.* Nay, John of Procida, that friend whose zeal
Despatch'd me to you, and your trust in whom
Made him the master of your hiding-place—
For, it behoved you, being what you are,
The friend of Sicily, like a wild beast
To house——that friend, with other thoughts than yours
Beheld the work of vengeance. In the midst
His voice was loudest, "Death to all that 's French!
Spare not—nor sex—nor age!"

*Pro.* I love the zeal,
But hate the excess.

*Guis.* Think 'twas the lava, sir;
And had it been, what then would you have said?
But, that it was the hand of Heaven stretch'd forth
Most righteously. For when was mercy shown
To us or ours by them? To say no more,
Our sisters, wives, and daughters, with their cheeks
Burning at shames, to think on, drives us mad,
Cried for atonement not one tittle short
Of that which we exacted! Be prepared.
Palermo marches on Messina. Not
A minute but she 's nearer, by the strides
Impatient vengeance takes, with first success
Flush'd and invigorated. You are look'd for,
As soul and limb of the enterprise. Beware,
The fire you wish to blaze, you put not out,
By damping it. For me, my sword abstains
From nothing that owns kindred with the blood
Whose pestilent nature, worse than pestilence,
Has scourged my native land. Look to yourself,
Fernando! [*Rushes out.*]

*Pro.* By that name they call my son!

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Is he devoted? Friend!—No! Let me think!
No; better I remove him from the rage
I might in vain attempt to mitigate;
They shall depart together. Who goes there?
Francisco?

*Enter* FRANCISCO [*a Sailor*].

*Fran.* Yes.

*Pro.* You keep your time. Where lies
The boat?

*Fran.* In the shade of yonder jutting rock
On which the moonbeam strikes.

*Pro.* 'Tis well; when those
With whom I mean to freight her shall arrive,
I 'll summon you; when they are safe bestow'd,
Pull for the fleet, right to the Admiral's ship.
Away and watch. [FRANCISCO *goes.*] Nature forebodes
a shock.
She is not herself, but motionless and still,
Like one that holds his breath with strong suspense.
Etna seems dead, as though her fires were out.
At morn I watch'd her, and again at noon,
At sunset last; I could not see a reek;
No, not so much as the light gauzy wreath
Shook from the veil which vaporous night hath left,
And morning, lifting with his glowing hand,
Melts, as he touches, into viewless air!
Charybdis holds her peace and Scylla sleeps!
The welkin does not stir. A heaviness,
Stillness, and silence, all unwonted, and
Portentous, hold possession of the world
As on the eve of some dread prodigy!

FERNANDO *and* ISOLINE *enter.*

*Fern.* Who is there?

*Pro.* A friend.

*Fern.* My father?

*Pro.* Yes, my son.
You are come in time. Methinks not yet the moon
Hath topp'd the hill of night. How is it, lady?
You seem to droop?



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*Iso.* 'Tis very sultry, sir.
I never felt the like. There 's not a breath.
*Pro.* No; not a breath, indeed. 'Tis a deep calm.
Wilt trust me, lady, as a friend?
*Iso.* I will!
As better than a friend—a father, sir.
The father of my husband!—by that title
In a brief hour almost as much endear'd
As he who call'd me daughter all my life.
*Pro.* A most sweet nature! Slaughter shall not force
The house of such a heart. Fernando!
*Fern.* Sir?
*Pro.* Anon a storm will burst upon Messina
More fierce than ever yet the elements
Did in their fury breed. Do you see a cloud?
*Fern.* No.
*Pro.* Understand me, then.
*Fern.* I understand you!
*Pro.* It brings no squall, no bolt, yon fleet need fear.
There you shall house to-night—your bride as well.
*Fern.* My father—
*Pro.* Peace!—Believe I love you, lady;
Not that I say so, but that I will show you
The deeds of love. Behoves it, though, at present,
You give me credit on my word alone,
And largely, too.
*Iso.* To what amount you will.
Provided, should you fail—and that, I am sure,
Would be the shame of fortune and not yours,—
My losses only light upon myself.
*Pro.* 'Tis frankly answer'd. Frankly, then, thus far
Give me your confidence on trust alone,
To change, to-night, your lodging for a berth
On board a barque that rides in yonder fleet,
Whereof the chief bears me a brother's love,
Which I, with the like, return. Hard by there waits
A boat, and he that holds your hand e'en now,
And has most right to it of all the world,
Shall go along with you.
*Fern.* O father, thanks!
*Iso.* For what, dear husband? Those were hearty thanks!

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Such payment waits not on small benefits.
What heavy debt do you and I incur
By sleeping, love, on board yon fleet to-night,
That you acknowledge it so largely?
*Fern.* Nay!
Question not, sweet! but come!
*Iso.* Nay; by your leave,
I'll think a little first. The thanks you pay
Mind me of thanks which I myself do owe
And ought to pay as well as you.—Did we lodge
With a mere friend—a friend of every day—
The common'st friend—we would not leave his house
Without "Good-bye and thank you." I have lived
With a good friend of mine for twenty years—
One that did cause me make his house my own;
As welcome to it every bit as much
As he himself!—Should I treat such a friend
Worse than I would a friend of every day?
No, love.—I'll go.—But you and I must bid
"Good-bye and thank you" to my father first.
*Pro.* [*aside*]. That note doth jar the tune that now
ran sweet!
*Iso.* What is't offends your father, that he frowns
And moves with step disturb'd? What angers him?
I see! I see!—I must return to mine.
*Fern.* It may not be!
*Iso.* Nay, by your leave, it must!
And say it must, dear love! Oh, make me not
The thing I would not be—a froward wife.
'Tis time enough for that—if e'er that come,
Which I'll be bound 'twill never with my will.
I would not for a thousand thousand worlds
Gainsay you any time, and chiefly now,
Just when I have paid my freedom down for you.
Oh, be a gentle master to me, love!
Don't overtask me, lest the duty, which
'Twere sweetness to discharge, grows weariness,
And I do cast the heavy burden down
I lack the strength to bear.
*Fern.* This once be ruled!
Only this once, and I'll obey you, love,



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For all my life to come! Give you command,
And try to overtask me, if you will,
And see if I complain—much less rebel.
Bear with me only now!
*Iso.* I will not, love,
Unless I know the reason; and when known,
Approve of it. Husband, deal fair with me.
Is't fit I do the thing my soul condemns?
How may it fare with you? Is she a wife
Who, as a daughter, fails? She cannot be.
Duty is uniform where duty is,
And can no more with disobedience bide
Than honesty with fraud. Am I not right?
Am I the guardian of your honour, love?
Ay, before any one!—before yourself!
Then by myself must I approve the trust,
And make fidelity my law in all things.
I'll see my father ere I seek yon fleet,
Or know the reason why I must not see him,
And find that reason right.
*Pro.* Yet more and more
It turns to discords!—Girl! your husband's life
Depends on your obeying him.
*Iso.* Does mine?
*Pro.* Yes.
*Iso.* And my father's, too?—I'll answer—No.
I comprehend. Some storm that's gathering
Around my father, you would save me from,
And, to that end, would counsel me forsake him.
Forsake my father!—Sir, are you a father
To counsel so a child? Is this the ruin
You told me of, and would have left me to,
Fernando?—but you did not leave me!—No!—
You were mine own love still! Sir, have you rule
Over the wind that brings this thunder cloud,
Divert it! Think how merciful is Heaven,
And copy it! My father is your foe,
But spare him—I spared you!
*Pro.* I would return
Your bounty, would you let me.
*Iso.* Could I let you,

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On terms like yours, I were unworthy of it!
Plead for my father! Will you not, Fernando?
Do it!—He was a father, love, to you!
*Pro.* Do it, and think upon your mother, boy!
Are you a man?—The boat lies round the rock;
There stands your wife; Destruction is at hand.
Seize her and snatch her from it!
*Iso.* If he dares!
'Twould make me hate him!—Yes, Fernando—love
Can turn to e'en as opposite a thing
As hate!—ay, in a moment!—Do not try it!
*Pro.* Listen, and learn the fate that threatens you,
And I would save you from! The men that were
But yesterday the spaniels of the French,
To-day are bloodhounds that eat up their masters.
Palermo knows it! Of thy country, all
That late drew breath in her have proved it—Man,
Woman, and Child! The rule is Massacre!
And now the dogs, mad with the game of blood,
Hark hither to repeat it.—There they are!
*Iso.* Where?
*Pro.* Don't you hear?
*Iso.* I do!—a distant sound.
*Pro.* It is their yelping as they speed along
On foam with haste and fury. Save your wife!
*Iso.* Fernando, touch your wife and she's a corpse!
Make but the offer and she slays herself!
Which is the way?—Point out the way to me—
The way to my father!—God! which is the way?
*Pro.* They 'll intercept you ere you reach the town!
*Iso.* Were it the lava that came boiling on
I'd cross it to my father!
*Pro.* You forget
Your husband!
*Iso.* He is safe—my father not:
I now am wife to danger!
*Fern.* Isoline!
*Iso.* Ha!—Yes!—There 'tis!—That light—O,
blessed light!
Blest though 'tis shining from a tomb!—I greet it
As never did I yet the rising sun. [*Rushes out.*

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*Pro.* [*stopping* FERNANDO]. Whither, my boy?
*Fern.* Father, to bring her back,
Or share her fate!
*Pro.* Fernando!
*Fern.* Better die
Than live—and, honour dead—nay, manhood dead,
Still bear thy name, living of all mankind
The execration! Farewell, father!
*Pro.* Stop!
Embrace me ere you go!
*Fern.* [*struggling with* PROCIDA]. Nay, father!
*Pro.* Nay,
But I will hold thee, boy!
*Fern.* She vanishes!
I have lost sight of her!—O, loose thy hold!
*Pro.* I cannot part with thee!
*Fern.* She will escape me!
*Pro.* Heavens, is my strength gone from me?—Is my child
Stronger than I?—Can I believe I have dwindled
While he has grown to brawn!
*Fern.* [*bursting away*]. Farewell!
*Pro.* He is gone!
And I am desolate in the world again!
O, the fine nature there that's run to waste!
Hark!—They are near the town.—Why, Procida,
Where is thy cause?—that which was wife, son, all
On earth was dear to thee? Who roused the spirit
That leads the march of death in progress, now?
Thou!—Where thy post then?—here, or at its head,
Directing it? Forgive me, Sicily,
Forgive me, martyr king!—and, Liberty,
Disown me not; I ever was thy son!
Away the private care! The public cause
Engross the heart I once gave up to it,
And now give up again! Quail, Tyranny!
Up, Freedom!—Claim your rights—and have them, too! [*Goes off.*

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SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Castle. Loud knocking outside, repeated two or three times.*

*Enter from the opposite side* AMBROSE *hastily.*

*Amb.* Give o'er!—What makes you knock so loud? Come in! [*Opens.*

*Louis* [*entering*]. The Governor!

*Amb.* He sleeps.

*Louis.* Awaken him!

*Amb.* Must I?—Till now he has not tasted rest;
His mind distemper'd by unquiet thoughts,
Things of no substance—visions, which his fancy
Hath conjured up to cheat his senses with;
Gazing on air, as 'twere endued with form,
Sinews and motion; and with silence holding
Discourse, as it could hear, and had a tongue.
Sleep hath but new composed him; I am loth
To abridge her friendly visit.

*Louis.* Better thou
Than death! Messina swarms on every hand
With signs of ferment. Ere the custom'd hour
The citizens forsake their couches for
The scarcely lighted streets; and frequent pass
From house to house, or here and there in groups
Stand muttering to one another; while
On our patrols, for whom they scarce make way,
Instead of looks of deprecation, scowls
They cast, that talk of blood as openly
As threats of murder. Something is on foot
Which instant wide example may suppress,
Whereto we wait the will of the Governor.

*Amb.* I'll call him then.—Soft,—he is here! Observe,
Attired as yesterday, rejecting all
The appliances of sleep!

*Gov.* [*entering*]. I am the dupe
Of mine own fancy, and I know it; yet
I am its dupe! My reason doth give way.
I come from my own chamber, where I stood
Just now in the hall of John of Procida.
I knew 'twas my own chamber, yet it seem'd

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His hall; and at the further end there sat
His wife, or else a spectre in her shape.
She did not breathe, methought, and yet she sate
Her chair erect, and saw; and glared at me
Until her eye-balls froze me. I come out
Into my antechamber. I am there!
I am sure I am! Still seem I standing yet
In that abhorred hall with that companion
Of aspect most unnatural, that makes
My flesh to creep and breathing grow so thick
I doubt 'tis air I draw!

*Louis.* He dreams, although
He seems awake.

*Amb.* No—no!—He does not dream!
It is not dreams men see with open eyes.
This mood hath grown upon him since he heard
Of John of Procida. My lord—my lord!

*Gov.* O, Ambrose, is it you? I am glad you are here.

*Amb.* I am, my lord; and here is Louis too,
Who dreads some ferment in Messina. Scarce
'Tis dawn, and yet the citizens have left
Their beds, and throng the streets with sullen looks,
Threatening disaster to their masters, which
To avert, behoves we force them to keep house,
And make, of the resisting, sharp example.

*Gov.* Take measures as occasion calls for them,
Arouse the garrison. Let one and all
Be under arms. Shed no more blood than 's needed.

[Louis *goes out.*

No news of John of Procida! The face
He saw not; 'twas the figure only struck him;
Recalling the impression of a man
He once had seen, but where he could not tell,
Nor who it was, till he at last bethought him
Of John of Procida, then told his thought
Not as a thing of doubt but certainty.
And then the disappearance all at once
Of him he so remark'd, was circumstance
Corroborative. Ever since, my heart
Hath felt a chill like that the body feels

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When cold hath smit it to the bone! so deep,
No art medicinal can draw it out,
And the wretch shivers at the very fire!
*Amb.* He is forgetful I am near him. Mark.
*Gov.* Hangs then my fate on John of Procida?
My heart forebodes it does.—Forebodes it right?
If so, when he 's at hand my doom is near.
As I do live 'tis gone! Spectre and all!
Ah! now I see you, Ambrose. Who comes yonder?
Is't not Le Clerc?
*Amb.* I'd say it was, my lord,
But for those marks of blood! He spent last night
Some two miles distant from Messina.

*Enter* LE CLERC, *supported by* MARTEL *and a Soldier.*

*Martel.* Here 's
Le Clerc come wounded home. He threw himself
From his horse into our arms, and without word,
Made for the staircase, which he stagger'd up,
As if by superhuman effort and
Made straight for your highness' chamber.
*Gov.* Well, Le Clerc?
What would you with me, friend? What has befallen
you?
He strives to speak, but cannot. Voice is fled,
And life is following it. One word, Le Clerc.
He dies in the attempt.—Yes; he is dead!
Remove him. Good Martel, be on the alert.
Arouse our friends. Look to the citizens!
[MARTEL *and the others go out, bearing the body between them.*
Of some dread visitation this must be
The dark but sure forerunner. Death is abroad.
Be sure of it. Yes, Ambrose, death is abroad!
Death!—Death!
*Louis* [*entering hastily.*] My lord, the sentinels upon
The walls hear sounds as of a multitude
Advancing on Messina. Scouts are sent;
What it behoves us look for, we shall learn
A few brief minutes hence.
*Gov.* Brief, do you say?



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Years are not brief, and minutes now are years!
What of the citizens?
*Louis.* Their numbers swell.
They move in masses up and down the city,
Returning dogged silence to our orders
To clear the streets. We wait for augmentation
To drive them into their houses. You do hear?
Our trumpets sound to arms.

*Enter* FRANÇOIS, *conducting* PIERRE, *much exhausted.*

*Gov.* Ay, lustily
They tell their need. What other spectre this?
Who is 't? He is ours and yet I know him not.
Who is 't, I say?
*Fran.* One from Palermo, sir,
Whose speed has cost him his good courser's life
To bring unwelcome news.
*Gov.* What tells it, friend?
*Pierre.* The massacre of every living soul
Of Gallic birth or blood, that in Palermo
Drew breath the day on which I 'scaped from it,
Preserved by feigning death!
*Martel* [*rushing in*]. A whelming flood—
A whelming human flood—comes raging on
Right for Messina. Haste, sirs! Massacre
Is at our very gates. Flight is cut off.
Resistance is our only hope. Forth!—Forth!
Houses are certain tombs!

[*All go out but the* GOVERNOR, *who seems transfixed.*

*Gov.* 'Tis Procida!
'Tis Vengeance!—Vengeance without mercy!—fierce!—
Implacable! On every side the sword!
I cannot hope to live—yet cannot die!
Flight—flight—the coward's refuge! Nothing else
Is left me! This way leads into the street!
The garden? Yes, it opes without the walls!
Conscience, 'tis thou, not I!—Except for thee
I would not quail!—The spectre here again!
Again the hall of John of Procida!
Away!—Flight!—Nothing else!—Away!—Away!

[*Rushes out.*

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SCENE THE LAST.—*The Garden of the Castle.*

*Enter* ISOLINE, *tottering and breathless—She leans against a tree—Sounds of tumult without, and the noise of martial instruments.*

*Iso.* Thus far in time—thus far in safety! Were't
Another stride, ere take it I had dropp'd.
The work is going on! O, spare my father—
Spare him, and deal with me! Hark! Massacre
Has left this quarter free; within the city
Holding her gory reign. She does not riot
Within the castle yet. He yet may live!
Limbs, hold me up. Don't fail me. Who comes here?
My father!—Father!

[GOVERNOR *enters hastily and wildly.*

*Gov.* Whosoe'er thou art,
Stop not my way!

*Iso.* Dost thou not know me?

*Gov.* No!
In times like these men know not one another.
Holding together, they together fall,
As men in knots do drown. In scattering
Is chance of safety. Do not hold me, friend.
Let go. Look to thyself. Let every one
Look to himself. He is lost that casts his eye
Upon another's jeopardy. His own
Asks all his care.—Let go!—Away!—Away!

[*Rushes off.*

*Iso.* [*thrown upon her knees.*] He does not know me!—He's my father, and
He does not know me! He's distracted—mad!
Fain would I follow him, but cannot.—No,
My knees refuse to raise me.

*Fern.* [*rushing in*]. Isoline!

*Iso.* [*springing up by a convulsive effort, and throwing herself into his arms*]. Fernando!—my Fernando!—True to death!
My husband—mine own love!—I die for joy!
And bless thee, my Fernando, for my death!

[*Swoons in his arms.*

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*Fern.* Love!—Wife!—Choice pattern of thy partial sex—
My Isoline! She is dead!—she is dead!—she is dead!
*Guis.* [*entering from the Castle, his sword drawn*]. Fernando!
*Fern.* Here, Guiscardo!
*Guis.* Who is she
Hangs swooning on thine arm? Thy bride?
*Fern.* My bride!
*Guis.* And dead?
*Fern.* And dead!
*Guis.* Set down the carrion, then,
And yield me payment for Martini's death!
I want not odds!—I'll fight thee like a man
For ancient friendship's sake!
*Fern.* Fight me, Guiscardo?
*Guis.* Cast down thy load to earth, and draw thy sword.
*Fern.* Wouldst murder me?—and if thou wouldst, Guiscardo,
Do it at once!
*Guis.* I'd treat thee like a man.
Wilt thou not throw thyself thy burden down,
And act like one, or must I wrest it from thee
To balk thee of excuse? [*Approaching.*
*Fern.* You touch her not!
'Fore her dead body do I throw my life
That would not save my own!
*Guis.* Have at thee, then!
[*They fight;* FERNANDO *is wounded.*
*And.* [*rushing in*]. Hold!—'Tis the son of John of Procida!
*Guis.* The son of John of Procida!
*Fern.* Too late!—
Take her! Preserve from insult—pay all honours,—
For her sake, not for mine, and lay us side
By side. I pant for death, and not the life
Would hold my spirit from rejoining hers! [*Dies.*

*Enter* JOHN OF PROCIDA.

*Pro.* It is not there!—I came to see his corse,
But not to smite him. No!—I would not stain

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This day of freedom with the narrow deed
Of personal vengeance.—To the swords of others
I would have left him, satisfied if they
The debt exacted that was due to mine.
But they, intent on their own quarry, mine
Have suffer'd to escape, and vengeance, now
Balk'd, by its own remissness, of its prey,
Gnashes the teeth in vain!

*And.* Di Procida!

*Pro.* Ho!—Andrea! What bear'st thou on thy arm?

*And.* The body of Fernando's wife, although
If this be death I do mistake its hue!

*Pro.* Who lies upon the ground? The Governor?

*And.* Thy son, O Procida!—She is not dead!
Help here!—Hold off!—You kill'd him!

*Pro.* Kill'd my son!

*Guis.* Strike, John of Procida! He sided with
The enemies of Sicily.

*Pro.* He did;
And he was born her son! Live!—You did right.
His father says it.—Yet, he was my son!

*Guis.* I knew not that.

*Pro.* And had you known it, still
You had done right—I say it—I—his father!
And yet he was my son!

*Iso.* [*recovering*]. My lord!—My husband!—
Fernando!—draw me closer to thy breast!
Hold off!—Who art thou?—Where's Fernando?—Who
Is that?

*And.* Fernando's father!

*Iso.* So it is!
And we are safe!—Are we not, sir?

[*Tottering toward* JOHN.

*Pro.* O, Heaven!

*Iso.* You will not let them murder us?—You will not!
You can't! else Nature have no truth in her,
And never more be trusted!—Never more!
If fathers will not stretch an arm to save
Their children's throats, let mothers' breasts run dry,
And infants at the very founts of life
Be turn'd to stones! Sir!—Father!—Where's your son?

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Ah, you repulse me not! You let me come
Closer to you.—Where's my Fernando, father?
What! do you draw me to you?—Would you take me
Into your very bosom?—There, then!
[*Throws her arms about his neck.*
Now,
Fernando, what's to fear?—Now, mine own love,
We shall be happy!—happy!—blessed happy!
Why don't you answer me?—Where is he, father?
I left him here! Where I have been I know not.
I recollect a sickness as of death,
And now it comes again. My brow grows chill
And damp—I'll wipe it! Blood!—What brings it here?
Whose blood is this?

*And.* Blood has been shed to-day.
No vestment in Messina, but you'll find
Some trace upon't.

*Iso.* Where is my husband, sirs?
Is this Fernando's blood?—We were together,
And it was here! If death did threaten us
He would be close to me, of his own life
Making a shield for mine! Was he alive,
Were he not here?—Not here, he must be dead,
And this must be his blood!

*Pro.* Remove her, friend;
Take and remove her hence. I lack the strength.
Her plight, to mine own added, weighs me down.
She must not see his body; 'tis her life
That I feel fluttering next my breast just now
As ready to take wing. 'Twere certain death
To look upon him.

*Iso.* [*to* ANDREA]. No, I will not hence!
You will murder me. I am safe here,—am I not?
Am I not, father? Father!—Where's my father?
He did not know me! He did shake me off!
He fled me! You are all my father now?
But there's Fernando, too!—You are not weeping?
You are!—Don't weep!—I'll dry your eyes for you!
The blood again!

*Pro.* We must remove her hence.
Come with me, child.

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*Iso.* Child!—Do you call me child?
Child is a sweet name!
*Pro.* Come, my daughter.
*Iso.* Daughter!
That's sweeter yet than child. Nothing so sweet
After the name of wife; but wife's not sweeter
Than husband.—Husband? That's the sweetest name
Of all! My husband is your son! and "son"—
There is a sweet name too!—No sweeter name
Than son! Do you not think so?
*Pro.* Come.
*Iso.* I come!
We are going to Fernando,—are we not?
Sir, fare you well. What's that upon the ground?
*And.* Where?
*Iso.* There! You know as well as I! Stand off!
[*Breaks away.*
Fernando!—My Fernando! dead?—Ay, dead
Indeed, when I do call on thee, and thou
Return'st no answer!—My Fernando!—Dead!
Ah! it is well! Here's silence coming too
For me, love. I do feel the frost of death
Biting my limbs, and creeping towards my heart.
Colder and colder—all will soon be ice.
'Tis winter ere its time! but welcome, since
'Tis shared with you, Fernando. Mercy, Heaven
'Tis kind—'tis pitiful to suffer me
On thy dead lips to breathe my life away. [*Dies.*
*And.* Let me conduct thee hence, O Procida!
Grief doth benumb his every faculty.
*Stephano* [*entering with others*]. Where is John of
Procida?
*And.* Behold him.
*Steph.* Health
To thee and to Messina, which, to-day,
Through thee, beholds her grievous yoke thrown off.
All Sicily is free! From north to south,
From east to west she garrisons herself,
And tyrants rule no more!
*And.* Forgive him that

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He heeds you not. The body is his son's
You see him gazing on!
*Steph.* We know his heart!
*Thomaso* [*entering with others*]. Health, John of Procida! The enemy
That sack'd thy castle, and who yesterday
Held rule in Sicily, the Governor,
Flying from death did meet it from this man,
Who knew him, intercepted him, and slew him.
*And.* All enmities, all loves, are swallow'd up
In the deep gulf of sorrow for his son.
*Carlo* [*entering with others*]. Where is our chief?
*And.* You see what's left of him.
*Carlo.* The admiral
And captains of the fleet have disembark'd
To swell the general joy; and, yonder, come
Our ancient magistrates, their offices
Suspended long, resumed to pay their debts
To John of Procida!

*Enter* MAGISTRATES, *&c.*

*Chief Magistrate.* Di Procida
The Liberator—so we hail thee—such
Thy deeds declare thee better than our words!
For us and for our children at our hands,
Whose act our sovereign master will approve,
Most poor return take for most rich desert,
And be the Governor of Sicily!
[*The whole Assembly shout and applaud*—JOHN OF PROCIDA *weeps.*
*Pro.* Forgive me—I'm a father—there's my son!

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# OLD MAIDS.

## A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

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TO

ROBERT DICK, ESQ.

OF

LOCH ARD LODGE, NEAR ABERFOYLE, BY STIRLING,

This Comedy

IS AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

*October*, 1841.

Hosted by Google

## CHARACTERS.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT COVENT GARDEN IN 1841.)

| | |
|---|---|
| *Sir Philip Brilliant* | MR. C. MATHEWS. |
| *Master Blount* | MR. F. MATTHEWS. |
| *John Blount* | MR. HARLEY. |
| *Thomas Blount* | MR. G. VANDENHOFF. |
| *Robert* | MR. W. LACEY. |
| *Bernard* | MR. AYLIFF. |
| *Harris* | MR. HONNER. |
| *Stephen* | MR. W. PAYNE. |
| *Jacob* | MR. WIGAN. |
| *William* | MR. KERRIDGE. |
| *Lady Blanche* | MADAME VESTRIS. |
| *Lady Anne* | MRS. NISBET. |
| *Mistress Blount* | MRS. W. WEST. |
| *Charlotte* | MRS. HUMBY. |
| *Jane* | MISS LEE. |

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# OLD MAIDS.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Room in* Sir Philip Brilliant's *House.*

*Enter* Bernard *and* Harris.

*Har.* What time to-morrow?

*Ber.* At noon, I told thee, he sets off. Be thou forthcoming an hour before at the latest; and mind no item be wanting. We lack leisure for mistakes.

*Har.* I shall be careful. How takes he this route to Ireland?

*Ber.* As he takes everything—with an even temper.

*Har.* He goes not there to sleep.

*Ber.* No; when he ought to be awake—but he will lose no wink of rest that a proper man should profit by; no more than he will step aside to avoid watching, toil, or peril; which he will share with the meanest soldier in his regiment. Sir Philip Brilliant is a butterfly in the drawing-room, but a man in the field. His nature is of the true stuff! He is a blade of proof in a dainty scabbard; you may laugh at the scabbard, but you won't at the blade.

*Har.* And takes he this expedition so coolly?

*Ber.* Coolly?—Judge of the fever it throws him into, when I tell you he has been occupied this hour past in trying on a new suit, with which he means to affront all comparison to-day, for its fashion and splendour. Let us be gone. Here he comes.

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*Har.* And with him Master Robert, his valet. What a pleasant incontinent rogue that Master Robert is!

*Ber.* Ay, but a frank one, and honest withal — a rogue for the humour only.

*Har.* I will tell you a trick he played me.

*Ber.* Nay; if you begin with his tricks, there will never be an end.

*Har.* But I must tell thee.

*Ber.* Well; be it as we pass to the door, then. Quick! They are here. [BERNARD *and* HARRIS *go out.*

*Enter* SIR PHILIP *and* ROBERT.

*Sir Phil.* Now, Robert, for I know you have an eye,
Examine me. Scan me from head to foot
And round about, and say how fits my dress,
And as you love me, Robert, use your skill.
Lie the seams fair? Sits any part awry?
Observe the buttons their due distances?
The slashes their proportions and their places?
The skirts their lengths and uniformity?
Lurks anywhere a wrinkle, or a crease?
Find me a fault, dear Robert, if you can.

*Rob.* The suit, methinks, is perfect.

*Sir Phil.* Look again
And jealously! Find me a fault, I'll find
A crown for you.

*Rob.* Sooner I'd miss the fault
Than get the crown.

*Sir Phil.* I know thy honesty.
But find the fault although thou get'st the crown.

*Rob.* What's that?

*Sir Phil.* What, Robert?

*Rob.* If I may believe
My eyes—

*Sir Phil.* Be sure thou may'st, if 'tis a fault
Thou think'st thou seest.

*Rob.* 'Tis a fault I see!

*Sir Phil.* What is it?

*Rob.* Yet, perhaps, 'tis not a fault.

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*Sir Phil.* It must be one! Thou 'rt not inclined to see it,
And, therefore, doubt'st it! What is it?
*Rob.* Alas!
It is a fault.
*Sir Phil.* A great or little one?
Don't keep me in suspense; I'm on the rack!
Well, Robert, well!
*Rob.* It is a little fault;
A very little fault—a wrinkle only
About an inch, a quarter, and a tenth
In length.
*Sir Phil.* Were it the tenth without the rest
It spoils the suit——off with 't! It shall go back!
*Rob.* It much becomes you! Well the colour sorts
With your complexion!—and the pattern flogs
All past achievements of the shaping art!
And 'tis a dress of excellent proportions,
Sets off your person to unmatch'd advantage.
Look at the sleeve alone!—How plain it shows
The tailor tax'd his brains!
*Sir Phil.* Where lies the wrinkle?
*Rob.* Here, near the seam of the left shoulder.
*Sir Phil.* That 's
A place a wrinkle may have leave to come!
Canst help the wrinkle? There 's the piece I promised
For finding it. If thou canst help it, now,
That piece will find a fellow.
*Rob.* I will try.
I will not promise you I shall succeed.
Stand straight and still. Now, please you, raise your arm;
Now put it down again—Upon my life
'Tis growing less.
*Sir Phil.* Well done, good Robert.
*Rob.* 'Tis
Almost away.
*Sir Phil.* Say it is quite away,
I'll give thee the third piece.
*Rob.* I would I could;
No hope of that, I fear! A wrinkle is

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A stubborn thing! Eh?—What?—I must be blind!
Why, where is it?
*Sir Phil.* Is't gone?
*Rob.* I am bewitch'd!
Is aught the matter, think you, with my sight?
Or that is gone, or else the wrinkle 's gone;
So gone I swear I cannot find the place!
I can't believe there ever was a wrinkle!
*Sir Phil.* Good Robert, there are the two crowns.
*Rob.* Dear sir,
I don't deserve them.
*Sir Phil.* Nay!—
*Rob.* Indeed I don't.
*Sir Phil.* I'll not believe thee.
*Rob.* Nay, I swear I don't.
I must have fancied that there was a wrinkle.
*Sir Phil.* Robert, a virtue may become a vice,
Carried too far! Thou art too honest, Robert.
*Rob.* Nay, hear me, sir!
*Sir Phil.* I won't! There was a wrinkle!
Did I not set me on my perfect poise?
Stood I not motionless as block of stone?
Then at thy bidding raised I not my arm,
And lower'd it again, while thou didst jerk
My skirts to take the wrinkle out?—and now
Persuade me there was none! There was a wrinkle!
I will not hear thee!—Peace! So Lady Blanche
And Lady Anne were in the Park to-day!
How look'd fair Lady Blanche?
*Rob.* Oh, charmingly!
But her companion were the maid for me;
I love her lip of scorn! It dares a man!
*Sir Phil.* That 's shrewdly felt! He were a man indeed
That carried her! That man is yet to come!
She glories in her single state; and train'd
To mastery in studies men affect,
And seldom progress in as well as she,
Looks down on all our sex o'erbearingly,
And leaves the field to lovely Lady Blanche.
Who, though she smiles on courtship, looks as cold
On matrimony as her scornful friend;

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While troops besiege her—I among the rest.
But now good-bye to Venus! Mars commands!
Be ready, Robert, for the route to-morrow!
We march at one; meanwhile to Ludgate Hill
I go, that careless artisan to chide
My beaver jewel who so slightly set,
I lost it in the street. Men call me fop,
And so I am, so will be, and why not?
It is my humour! Better fop than fool;
And he 's a fool that does not please himself.
And so the more they smile, the more they may;
The more I 'll give them cause, and smile myself,
Sitting at ease in mine own snug content,
Wearing a cheery, frank, and saucy cheek!
Now tell me, Robert, what men say of me?
What comeliness they give me credit for
Besides my person, which I know will pass?

*Rob.* They say, though rather vain, you are very brave.

*Sir Phil.* What is it to be brave! I give Heaven thanks
I was not born a spaniel!—What had I
To do with that? Find something of mine own
For which they praise me, I will thank them then!
What say they to my gait? I made my gait
Myself! There 's matter in men's gait, good Robert!
Therein you have the impress of their callings;
There is the clerk's gait, which implies obedience;
The shopkeeper's, half service, half command;
The merchant's o'er-revolving speculations;
The lawyer's, quick and keen at quirks and flaws;
The student's, ponderous as piles of folios;
The courtier's, supple, prompt for courtesies;
The soldier's, keeping time with drums and trumpets;
And twenty others—all most common-place!
But there 's one gait that 's paramount of all—
The gentleman's, that speaks not any calling;
Shows him at liberty to please himself;
And while it meditates offence to none,
Observes a proper negligence towards all,
And imperturbable complacency! [*They go out.*



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SCENE II.—MASTER BLOUNT'S *House.—A Room contiguous to his Shop.*

*Enter* JOHN BLOUNT *and* THOMAS BLOUNT.

*Thomas.* I will not bide the baiting of thy tongue!—
I say, I will not!—Let my father rail,
I'll hear him patiently. I owe not thee
Observance!—What 's the year or two thou hast
The start of me?

*John.* I speak but for thy good.

*Thomas.* Nay, not for that! Thou wouldst speak kindly else!
The fault thou find'st would reach no ear but mine;
I know thee, brother; my defect thou makest
A finger-post to show thine own deserts,
To win me anger, while thyself win'st praise!
I know thee, John!—I say no more of this;
I will not bear it!—should not!—I'm a man!

*John.* Wilt strike me?

*Thomas.* Heaven forbid my mother's son
Should e'er get blow from me. I tell thee what,
Thou aim'st at empire of my father's heart!
Thou to my father's business wouldst be heir!
Be so!—Thou ne'er shalt find in me a let.
His stock-in-trade, good-will, whate'er he hath
Pertaining to his craft, or grown from it,
I freely from this hour renounce all share in!
I'll seek my fortune!—Here I will not stay
To play the money-grub—while men, not made
Of better metal, find themselves a name
That lifts them 'bove their birth!

*Enter* MASTER BLOUNT.

*Mast. Blount.* How 's this?—at words?
Thy brother John has been reproving thee.
And thou resistest him—and wherefore, son?
Because he 's right, and thou art in the wrong!
The counter, boy!—go practise patience there!
'Twas that which made thy father, with the help
Of industry. 'Tis roof, son; bed and board,
With which 'tis well thou art provided, else
Thou ne'er hadst earn'd them, Thomas, for thyself!

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*Thomas.* I might have earn'd them, had I been allow'd!

*Mas. Blount.* Allowed?

*Thomas.* To earn them in the way I could!

*Mas. Blount.* Thou 'dst be a soldier, or wouldst go to sea—
Chimeras evermore of boyhood's brain!

*John.* I never knew them, father.

*Mas. Blount.* Never, John;
Thou ever didst my wish, and didst it well.

*John.* And found my own in it. Except for sleep
And meals, I never took an hour from work,
Nor would, suppose I might—nor cared I what
You set me to—the crucible, the vice,
The desk or counter—'twas your will, and done.

*Mas. Blount.* Ay, John, you are a pattern of a boy!
Go, Thomas! copy by your elder brother!
Demean yourself submissively to him;
Remembring thou dost thy father's will!

*Thomas.* I love my father! Would that I could love
My father's craft— but that I cannot love!

[*Goes out following* JOHN.

*Enter* MISTRESS BLOUNT.

*Mis. Blount.* Heard I not words? I did!—what's wrong with Thomas?
John has been chafing him again! He's not
The boy to bear it, nor is't right he should.
The shop don't fit him, husband! Thou wouldst put
Thy turnspit to his use, thy hound to his,
Did any counsel thee, exchange their work;
Thou'dst think him fool, didst thou not call him one!
Thy cart-horse foal when thou didst set to cart,
Thou didst the thing was wise!—as wisely didst
To break thy jennet's filly for the saddle;
As beast of draught she were not worth her meat!
Givest ear to me? Dost weigh my words?

*Mas. Blount.* I do.

*Mis. Blount.* And if thou dost, thou wilt not find them light.
And dost perceive the sequel?



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*Mas. Blount.* No.
*Mis. Blount.* I am sure
Thou dost not! Never canst thou see the thing
That lies not straight before thee. Ope thine eyes,
And I will put the sequel in their range
Point blank! Men vary more than horse or dog.
Not as the parentage the progeny!
The noble's cradle rocks a churl—the churl's
A nobleman! A simple craftsman thou,
Hast son the craft was never made would fit;—
And he must drudge because his father did!
*Mas. Blount.* Drudge dost thou say?
*Mis. Blount.* Ay, drudge! and say't again.
*Mas. Blount.* His brother drudges.
*Mis. Blount.* So his brother may:
It is his humour; he's his father's son.
*Mas. Blount.* Whom takes the other after?
*Mis. Blount.* Whom?—why me!
I tell thee, Thomas is his mother's son,
No handicraft will he make progress in;
Money he values for the using on't—
Would buy a coach and horses in the time
Thou balancest the outlay of a truck!
*Mas. Blount.* A hopeful son, methinks, has Master Blount,
The Ludgate jeweller.
*Mis. Blount.* Most hopeful John;
But not in the shape thou wishest hope to come in,
With sleek comb'd hair and ponderous busy brow,
Scanning a bodkin to resolve him whether
'Tis gold or pinchbeck!—I forgot!—Thy hope
Hath comely apron on!—Now look at mine!
A youth of standard height! proportion'd well
In trunk and limb! Of handsome face and bold!
Very! A cap and plume upon his head,
Across his field of breast a scarf and belt,
And in the belt a sword as fits a man!
*Mas. Blount.* What cavalier is this?
*Mis. Blount.* What cavalier?
Thou knowest not thine own son, husband John!
I lose all patience with thee! Listen now!

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Thou hast a son whom fortune meant to climb,
And thou wouldst have to creep!—What use is he
In thy shop or workshop, where thou cast'dst him when
He came from school, as metal that is fused
Into the mould, thinking he'd take what shape
It pleased thee give him?—Flesh and blood are not
So passive, John!—How little knowest thou,
Dear John, beyond thy trade! Nine months ago
Lapsed his apprenticeship of seven long years,
And earns he now the keep of journeyman?
No!—do I blame him? No!—when thou get'st gold
To do the work of lead, I'll blame him, John,
But not till then.

*Mas. Blount.* The fault is thine.

*Mis. Blount.* Is mine!
Am I in fault?

*Mas. Blount.* I say—

*Mis. Blount.* Am I in fault?

*Mas. Blount.* I won't say fault.

*Mis. Blount.* Go on.

*Mas. Blount.* Thou hast him taught
The ways of gentleman. Contents thee not
He learn our homely measures, he must skip
As courtiers do, so thou provid'st him with
A foreign dancing-master! Not enough
The jockey taught his brother should teach him,
Behoves him have a soldier's seat, and so
Thou get'st a regimental riding-master!

*Mis. Blount.* Proceed, good husband John.

*Mas. Blount.* It pleased thee not
Dick Cottingham should teach him quarter-staff—

*Mis. Blount.* Dick Cottingham!—I'd beat Dick Cottingham
At quarter-staff myself!

*Mas. Blount.* Thou must employ
Professionals in that.

*Mis. Blount.* Teach a boy right,
Or not at all! Go on!

*Mas. Blount.* From quarter-staff
He needs must to the rapier go.

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*Mis. Blount.* No doubt!

*Mas. Blount.* The which—not satisfied the boy should get
A simple notion on't—he practises
Till he can beat his master.

*Mis. Blount.* Art not glad
Of that?—Art thou not glad on't, husband John?
The day will come, and mind my words it will,
When thou wilt chuckle at it!—chuckle, husband!
Thy boy can beat his master!—who'll beat him?

*Mas. Blount.* John is as good a boy!

*Mis. Blount.* Who cheapens John?
What loss to him his brother gets his due?
He likes the inside of the counter!—Well,
He has it!—Thomas likes the other side!
And yet thou know'st not John!—Though he 's my son,
He's cunning. 'Tis not natural in one
So young in years to be in acts so old.
The husbandman prefers a backward spring!
The fruit is doubted comes before its time!
Did John observe thee less, 'twould please me more!
What wouldst thou say now should I tell thee plain
His fancies look a mile beyond the shop,
In which thou think'st his heart wrapp'd wholly up?
'Tis so; he'd laugh to throw the apron off
He smiles at putting on!

*Mas. Blount.* Thou wrong'st him, wife.

*Mis. Blount.* Believe so as thou wilt—let me know Thomas,
He'll ne'er ply craft, but be a gentleman.
That time is come with you, and still you toil.

*Mas. Blount.* I'll think on what thou say'st

*Mis. Blount.* So, husband, do.
The man who has a wife hath counsel, John,
At hand that 's ever better than his own! [*Goes out.*

*Sir P. Bril.* [*without.*] Within is he? Then I'll step in to him.

*Mas. Blount.* Sir Philip Brilliant!—He speaks angrily.

*Sir Phil.* [*entering*]. How comes it, Master Blount, you treat me thus?
Why callest thou thyself a jeweller,

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And set'st a gem so carelessly, as soon
As worn, 'tis lost? Where is the brilliant, sir,
I paid thee down a hundred crowns for? Look!
'Tis gone (*showing his hat*).
*Mas. Blount.* I see it is, and grieve for it.
*Sir Phil.* Wilt thou replace it?
*Mas. Blount.* Is it fit I should?
*Sir Phil.* Yes; for you set it.
*Mas. Blount.* Yes; and set it well!
*Sir Phil.* Well, Master Blount! Set'st thou a jewel well,
And falls it out as soon as set?
*Mas. Blount.* The loop
You must have strain'd!—You flung your beaver down,
And gave it blow, perhaps; or doffing it
Too freely, swung'st against a wall or rail,
And shook'st, thyself, the jewel from its seat.
*Sir Phil.* Not so I doff my beaver! — throw it down!
'Sdeath, Master Blount, thou think'st it not enough
Through fault of thee I lose a peerless gem—
Thou must disparage, too, my bearing, sir!
My carriage, sir, wherein I stand alone,
Which prize beyond a mine—ay, mines of gems!
I fling my beaver down?—I strike a wall
Or rail, in doffing it? I?—I?—The gem
I might forgive, but can't pass over that!
Down, sir, and beg my pardon!
*Thom.* [*coming forward*]. He shall not!
The gem was fitly set.
*Sir Phil.* How knowest thou?
*Thom.* My father says it!—That the gem was lost,
Was fault of thine alone.
*Sir Phil.* Do you know me?
*Thom.* Yes.
*Sir Phil.* I know thou dost; yet knowing it, I doubt
Through wonder at thy boldness, sirrah!
*Thom.* What!
*Sir Phil.* Know'st thou what cuffs are?
*Thom.* Yes; I have given them!

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*Sir Phil.* Ay?
'Tis time thou learn to take them.
*Thom.* Thou'rt not he
Can teach me that.
*Sir Phil.* [*aside to him*]. Ay?—Thou prefer'st perhaps
A higher lesson. Can'st thou use a sword?
*Thom.* [*aside to Phil.*] By trying thou can'st judge.
*Sir Phil.* [*aside to Thom.*] If worthy one,
Thou'lt steal a rapier out and follow me
A pace beyond the wall—I'll wait thee there. [*Goes out.*
*Mast. Blount.* What said he, Thomas?
*Thom.* Something—nothing, sir.
His fault methinks he half begins to see.
That errand, brother, you would send me on,
I hasten now to do.
*Mast. Blount.* What errand, Thomas?
*Thom.* John will inform you, sir. [*Goes out.*
*Mast. Blount.* What is it, John?
*John.* I vow he has scared my memory out of me.
*Mast. Blount.* What errand has thy brother gone upon?
*John.* I vow I have forgot.
*Mast. Blount.* There 's something more
Than he would let me see.—Thy cap, boy, haste,
While I get mine, for we must after him! [*They go out.*

## SCENE III.—*The outside of London Wall.*

*Enter* Sir Philip Brilliant.

*Sir Phil.* The goldsmith's son has won me! There are men,
I have heard warriors say, look beautiful
In action. So would he! How radiantly
The man shone out! We'll change a pass or two.
I'll touch him, that I prove him! 'Tis one thing
To talk about the rapier's point, another
To look upon it, and another yet
To feel it. He shall feel it—not to rue it!
He comes! There is purpose in his looks! His heart

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And feet are going the same way! The man
I take him for!—worth winning for a friend!—
You have made haste.

*Enter* THOMAS.

*Thom.* What haste I could.
*Sir Phil.* I know it,
And I expected it, and like you for it!
I love an enemy to be in earnest!
You are sure you use the rapier?
*Thom.* Judge yourself—
I am ready for you!—Come! [*They fight.*
*Sir Phil.* You are too hot,
And lay yourself too open. Twice just now
I could have run you through!
*Thom.* Why did not you?
*Sir Phil.* Aha! Beware, or you will make me hug you!
*Thom.* Come on.
*Sir Phil.* Be cooler, then.
*Thom.* I will.
*Sir Phil.* That's right!
Most sweetly parried!—Better yet return'd!
That feint was masterly; I baulk'd it though—
I have hit you!
*Thom.* No! Come on!
*Sir Phil.* I am sure I have!
*Thom.* Come on!
*Sir Phil.* You felt me, for I felt my point!
*Thom.* Come on, I say!
*Sir Phil.* Since you will have it so!
That longe meant something, but it would not do.
Prepare!—I'll hit you now again! 'Tis done!
*Thom.* I fight, not talk!
*Sir Phil.* I talk whene'er I fight,
As when I eat or drink.
*Thom.* Come on!
*Sir Phil.* Again!
I have hit you thrice.
*Thom.* I feel no wound!
*Sir Phil.* There 's blood!



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*Thom.* A scratch brings blood!
*Sir Phil.* A deep one, though, it takes
To drain the cheek; and thine is growing pale—
Not, I'll be sworn, with fear! I touch'd you only
Because I meant to sting you, not to kill,
Before I knew you as I know you now.
But knowing you as now I do, I swear
I would not kill you for mine own life's sake,
Which at your will I place!
[*Throws down his sword;* THOMAS *drops his, and tottering towards* SIR PHILIP, *faints in his arms.*]
I fear'd 'twas so,
But fear no worse.—He faints, from loss of blood;
A flesh-wound, nothing graver—stanch'd, 'tis heal'd!

*Enter* MASTER BLOUNT *and* JOHN.

*Mast. Blount.* Sir Philip, what 's amiss?
*Sir Phil.* Your son revives;
A passing sickness only, Master Blount;
Stanching removes it quite. Your handkerchief
To keep the compress on I make of mine.
His colour comes again and all is right!
Now hear you, Master Blount. Ne'er left your shop
A jewel rich as is this son of yours.
Commit his fortunes to my hands!—You shall!
I have proved his metal—it has won my heart,
And turn'd me from a foe into a friend;
Yea more, a brother, bound to him as fast
As he partition'd with me the same blood.
Refuse me not!—I will not be gainsaid!
My footman comes—my carriage is at hand.

*Enter* Footman.

The gem I lost I will forgive thee for,
And fifty to its back, so grant me this.
Although not born a gentleman, thy son
Was form'd to be one; such I'll make of him!
So farewell desk and counter, Master Blount!
There!—gently—come along with us!—Take care!
[SIR PHILIP *and his footman, supporting* THOMAS, *go out, followed by* MASTER BLOUNT.

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*John.* The shop is now my own! As we came hither,
My father said he would retire from it,
And leave his trade to me!—and if he does,
Not long his trade and I keep company.
We have been intimates too close—too long—
Familiarity begets contempt!
I hate and scorn my trade. He little knows
What riches burrow in his drawers and chests;
The keys of which I keep, and he forgets!
My plans are laid!—Soon as he quits the town,
I sell off stock and trade, and quit the shop!
Talk of our Thomas!—He a gentleman!
Where is the money? I have taken care
Of that! From interest on his bonds alone
My father will retire in affluence;
The rest is mine, and I'll make use of it
To lay myself out for a high alliance
By marriage!—Trust to me for policy.
If there is one thing I am better in
Than any other thing—'tis policy. [*Goes out.*

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## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*The Park.*

*Enter* ROBERT, STEPHEN, *and* JACOB.

*Rob.* He is as rich as Crœsus, sirs, with wit
Enough to keep his purse-strings tight, unless
His own particular occasion prompts
The wish to loosen them! He is at once
Luxurious and a miser.—Some good nature,
More cunning, less discretion. You see through him,
He has a vanity which lays him open
To commonest observers: for example,—
Know him an hour, and he spreads out for you
A banquet of his tastes, his faculties,
His qualities; wherein he most succeeds—
Which is by turns, indeed, in everything—

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Not that he would appear to slight his neighbours,
Or wish to pass for anything, beyond
A common, simple, ordinary man!

*Steph.* Where made you this redoubtable acquaintance?

*Rob.* Why, at a race-course, on a holiday,
When fortune made us neighbours. One who knew me
At distance, gave me salutation by
The title which I hold in virtue of
My place near fair Sir Philip! In a moment
I was a friend the richer! Straight he grappled me!
His name, his station, income, residence,
All in a twink were mine—his sole omission
The stock he sprung from, which he would root up—
Yea, sirs, the very father that begot him!
And gave up stock and trade to him—and affluence
Beyond his calculation; the slow piling
Of fifty years and upwards, to himself
Grown out of mind, but not to his successor;
Who, having long imprison'd upstart wishes
Beneath the homely apron of his craft,
Now throws this off, no more of use to him,
And shows the others, need no more concealment!
Converts his drawers and shelves to currency,
His currency to lands and messuages,
And o'er the tradesman's counter featly vaulting,
Springs into the saddle of the gentleman!
By strangest chance I learnt his history.

*Jacob.* Hopeful acquaintance.

*Rob.* Say fruition-full!
Well, sir, "I must go home with him; partake
What a plain dresser sends." Ere dinner's done,
I am in his bosom! Now beseeches he
My list of lady spinsters, which I give him,
The features, stature, carriage and complexion,
Wit, temper, parentage and education;
When of my goodness prays he introduction
To one I think would suit him!

*Steph.* Which, of course,
You grant him.

*Rob.* Readily!

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*Steph.* My life upon it,
The countess!
*Jacob.* Charlotte!—Maid to Lady Jane?
*Rob.* No less.
*Jacob.* Had he but known the rogue he dealt with!
A simpleton as safe beside a sharper!
*Rob.* Yet knowing, modestly, I had my masters
Compared to whom I am a journeyman,
I promised presentation to your lordships—
For you are lords in virtue of your places,
As I, in right of mine, a baronet—
And here appointed him this afternoon
His walk to that intent! Ah, here he is!
I pray you keep your rank before your eyes
In all you say and do. They only may
Forget their rank who have good title to it,
And by the lapse prove gainers. Mind, you are lords.
*John* [*entering*]. Good morning to you, fair Sir Philip. Fair
Is fairest worth.—So, sir, I bow to you.
*Rob.* The noble friends I had the honour, sir,
Of naming to you—this Lord Stephen Hyde,
And this Lord John Fitzwalter.
*John.* Dear me, sir,
You overpower me!—May I use the freedom
To shake hands with your lordships?
*Steph.* 'Tis a boon, sir,
We would entreat of you!
*John* [*to* ROBERT]. There's noble breeding!
*Rob.* Whence come you?
*John.* From my after-dinner airing,
In my own phæton, built to my own order,
After a pattern of my own designing;
The springs my own, the perch, the pole, the colour,
Harness and everything! So please your lordships,
I have a taste, and it shall have its way
While I can pay for it.
*Steph.* As right it should, sir.
*John.* Then am I fond of driving.
*Jacob.* Most men like
The thing that they excel in.

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*John.* Oh, my lord!—
Your lordship may have seen me hold the reins—
I flatter myself you have!
*Jacob.* You may so safely.
*John.* I could have sworn you had! If there is one thing
I master 'fore another, it is holding
The reins.
*Rob.* What did you before breakfast?
*John.* Ride—
Your lordships fancy horses?—All men do
Who have good judgment, and can back them well.
Mine are all thorough-bred!—my hackney even!—
And broke in for myself.—A horse, my lords,
Should know his master, and him only!—No
Believing what a universe of mischief
Is done by a strange hand! The mouth is spoil'd!—
If not the mouth, the pace; if not the pace,
The temper!—maybe temper, pace, and mouth
Together!—What's the value of the horse?
And then the seat—no easy thing, my lords!
Of fifty men who vault into the saddle,
Not one may have a seat there! In the manage
Be there one thing wherein I beat another.
'Tis in my seat!
*Steph.* Most safely may you say it.
*John.* Your lordship, I presume, has seen me ride.
Sir Philip, 'hope you have not got a headache?
*Rob.* Not I!—have you?
*John.* Why something rather like one,
For which I blame the wine of yesterday.
*Rob.* Nay, sir, the wine was good.
*John.* Oh, excellent;
A most sound wine, and of the proper age;
Three years in wood, in bottle thrice that time;
The merchant durst not cheat me, for he knows me.
I ne'er keep wine but of prime quality!
I have a cellar—no one less occasion
To find fault with his wine!—were mine not good,
The money was that bought it!—but no foresight
Is match against mishap!—a bottle may

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Be cork'd. 'Twas so with the last bottle! At
The time I had a slight suspicion only,
But now I am positive!
*Rob.* You are deceived.
*John.* Impossible, my dear Sir Philip. If
I am superlative in anything,
Beyond all other things that I excel in,
'Tis in my taste for wine!
*Rob.* But now to business!
My noble friends approve the match we spoke of,
And promise you their interest, to help
Your wish to its fulfilment!
*John.* They o'erpower me!
My lords, I am beholden to you more
Than did I ransack the whole dictionary,
I could find words of value to convey me!
Befits it, though, a private gentleman,
Of modest fortune only, at the best,
Should offer hand to dame of quality?
Talk'd you not, dear Sir Philip, of promotion?
*Rob.* Oh, yes!—promotion certainly—Lord John,
Where have you the most interest? in church
Or state?
*Steph.* 'Tis difficult to say—let's see!
Upon my word, I think it is a balance!
*Rob.* And how say you, Lord Stephen?
*Jacob.* Like Lord John,
In church and state, my interest is equal.
*Rob.* [*to* JOHN.] How leans your predilection?—to
the church?
*John.* Why, hang it, no! the surplice spoils the figure,
A man and gown sort strangely!—fancy me
In a gown! I might endure it on the Sunday,
But for the week-day gear that's tack'd to it!
Of formal mode and sombre colour! Dress
All the year round most like an undertaker
In waiting upon funerals!—could I wear
This cap and plume were I a clergyman?
*Rob.* [*and the rest.*] No, certainly!
*John.* The church won't do for me.
*Rob.* It must be in the state, then! For what office

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Would you be ready on emergency,
Say one fell sudden vacant?
*John.* Will you believe me,
I cannot tell!
*Rob.* There is the home department,
And there's the foreign! There's the minister
Of war and of finance!—Diplomacy
Perhaps might suit your genius! Which of these
Would find you most at home, sir?
*John.* Do you know,
I'm at a loss to tell!—Indeed I am!
Upon my life I am!—To answer you
Safely for both your credit and my own,
I think 'twere best I say, as likely one
As another.
*Rob.* Doubtless there is none you fear
To undertake.
*John.* None!—Fear? No fear, Sir Philip!
Find me the office, I am sure to find
Abilities to fill it!
*Robert.* Yet perhaps
There's something you prefer to church or state;
What think you of the army?
*John.* Of the army?
It is my taste, my bent, my very instinct!
It must be! why should else a fife and drum
Raise in me such commotion? When I hear them,
The war is all before me!—Infantry,
Cavalry, and artillery, and baggage!
Marchings, encampings, battles, sieges!—Feats
In the field and breach of superhuman daring,
Such perils breasted and o'ercome, as man
Durst never cope before with—look at—think of—
All of my own conceiving!
*Robert.* Dream you never
Of dying in such straits?
*John.* No!—Never!
*Robert.* Strange!—
I may say wonderful.
*John.* You may!—Through bayonets
And swords I rush, as they were stubble—hail

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Of cannon balls, shells, musketry, no more
Than wither'd leaves blown round by winds in autumn!
*Robert.* And are you never wounded?
*John.* Wounded?—Yes!
Struck down, but up and on my feet again
Almost in the self-same moment!
*Robert.* Pain and all
Forgotten?
*John.* As a pin had scratch'd me.
*Robert.* And
Enacting more than ever!
*John.* Miracles!
*Steph.* He certainly was born to be a soldier.
*John.* And such I will be with your leaves, my lords.
What rank?
*Robert.* Behoves you be an ensign first,
From ensign to lieutenant, thence to captain,
On captain mounts the major, on the major
The colonel.
*John.* Takes it long to be the colonel?
*Robert.* By service long, by interest not at all!
*John.* I'll choose the army.
*Robert.* Yet, my lords, a word:
'Twill never do to court proud lady Blanche
As ensign or lieutenant: nay, as even
Captain or major!—Nothing less, my lord,
Than colonel! Here is a dilemma!
*Steph.* A
Dilemma certainly.
*Jacob.* A sad dilemma.
*John.* My lords!—Sir Philip—what is to be done?
*Robert.* Stop!—Hold!—I have it!—What is sure to come
One surely may regard as come already!
*Steph.* Ay, come as certain as about to come.
*Robert.* And why not call him colonel then at once?
Your lordship will have no objection?
*Steph.* None.
*John.* My dear good lord.
*Robert.* Nor you, my lord?

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*Jacob.* No more
Than his lordship.
*John.* My most excellent good lord!
*Robert.* Then, Colonel Blount, I give you joy!
*John.* My dear
Sir Philip!
*Steph. and Jacob.* Give you joy, fair Colonel Blount.
*John.* Dear lords—dear friend—I choke with gratitude.
*Robert.* There only wants the introduction now,
Which I'll accomplish with your lordship's help.
I know you'll patronise my friend, whilst I
Take charge of Lady Blanche; and as we go,
We'll settle time and place! Come, Colonel; show us
How you can court!
*John.* Court, sir?—Did you say, court?
Therein am I especially at home!
May I presume on any excellence
I have, it is on knowing how to court! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in the House of* LADY ANNE.

*Enter* CHARLOTTE *and* JANE.

*Char.* A fine plot, is it not?
*Jane.* But where the profit,
Besides the mirth 'twill bring you!
*Char.* Quite enough!
*Jane.* You have not seen him yet?
*Char.* That happiness
Lies in perspective. They appoint to-day
The time and place of meeting. If, by chance,
You note me in the street with a strange friend,
Remember I'm the countess—pass me by,
Unless I give you sign I am myself.
*Jane.* And Robert plann'd it all?
*Char.* Robert?—For shame,
Sir Philip, if you please! If, when together,
We talk of one another, keep in mind
We are our noble selves! You Lady Anne!
I, Lady Blanche!—Robert, Sir Philip Brilliant,

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Jacob and Stephen of their masters' styles;
Lord John Fitzwalter and Lord Stephen Hyde!
And so through all our circle of familiars!
'Tis but with such as do not understand us,
Who know us less than we do one another,
We pass for commoners! You are new to us!
Sir Philip is the author of the plot.
'Twas not to lose his time he went to college—
No more than others born and bred above him—
And spent three years there! You will travel ere
You find his match in mischief.
*Jane* [*listening*]. Did you hear
My lady's voice?
*Char.* I heard that person speak.
*Jane.* That person?
*Char.* Lady Anne, 'long as you live,
Never let down yourself!—You'll find too many
Ready to do that kindness for you.
*Jane* [*listening*]. There
Is Lady Blanche.
*Char.* I think it is that person.
Don't look surprised—although we owe her some
Consideration as our foster sister,
Who shared with us our mother's nurture—nay,
Participates with us almost one nature,
Making a jest of love, and sport of lovers;
While she you deign to serve escheweth both!
We trust your ladyship will be at home
To-morrow when we call.
*Jane.* Yes, Charlotte.
*Char.* Charlotte! Forgive me, Lady Anne—your ladyship
Forgets yourself! 'Tis Lady Blanche departs
And bids good morning to your ladyship!
[*They go out severally.*

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## SCENE III.—*Another Room.*

*Enter* LADY BLANCHE *and* LADY ANNE.

*Lady Bl.* Man!—man!—the paragon!—the fool he is
When women know themselves and know to treat him;
The knave when left to his own practices!
Is there a husband you can name, who bears
His course of wooing out?—who does not prove it
A trade of common snaring?—who resembles
The man he was before the honey-moon?
A woman's life, my friend, from girlhood onwards
Has melancholy progress! She begins
A goddess; then declines into a bride—
Which means a young wife keeping holiday,
As children sent to school go not at once
To tasks—next sinks into a housekeeper—
Her wedding-ring her badge of office!—thence
Haply into a nurse!—When matters not
How soon she settles into grandmama,
To tell her offspring of her second stock
The story of her cozening!

*Lady A.* How I love you
When thus you talk! Would all our sex were like you!
And, yet, you suffer men, while I repel them!

*Lady Bl.* I suffer them to plague them, and I do so.
You are an old maid by anticipation,
And make the arch dissemblers stand aloof.
Oh, how I dote upon a staunch old maid!—
I'll die one!—She stands up for liberty;
Talk of the rights of men! The rights that want
Upholding are the rights of women!—Men
Are tyrants! have too many rights! We know it!
Ours are the rights want champions! We should be lost
Without old maids—Oh, the delicious crabs!
The faces men make at them when they find them
Their masters!

*Lady A.* Women have more soul than men.

*Lady Bl.* Men have no soul at all compared to women;
Look at Queen Bess! The man she made of England—

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A man to cuff all comers! She was in fault
In one thing, though.
*Lady A.* And prithee what was that?
*Lady Bl.* She did not call her own sex to her councils!
Which had she done, women had proved themselves
The things they could be, would men give them leave!
Cecil and Burleigh!—Bacon!—What were they
But what a woman made them? Men, indeed!
There was a sample of man's proper place,
When Essex got his ears box'd!—Do you feel
Your fingers tingle? Mine do!—Yet was she
In love with Essex!
*Lady A.* Were you ne'er in love?
*Lady Bl.* Are you in madness! Wherefore do you ask?
*Lady A.* Because of late whene'er you talk of love
You sigh! I have had strange thoughts about you, Blanche.
They call you a coquette, and so you are;
Yet something tells me, once upon a time
You felt a touch of love. Do you remember
A certain fair Whit Monday? Ah, you blush!
*Lady Bl.* Because you tax me!—Blush!—That fair Whit Monday
We went a-shopping; and, for an adventure,
Disguised ourselves as simple yeomen's daughters.
What's there to blush at?
*Lady A.* Nothing, if no more—
If nothing follow'd—if that fair Whit Monday
You did not make a conquest of a youth
Who waited on us.
*Lady Bl.* Was it at the Draper's?
*Lady A.* No, Blanche. No youth was in the draper's shop!
*Lady Bl.* The mercer's, then?
*Lady A.* Nor was it at the mercer's,
Nor yet the cordwainer's—where had it been,
How had the blushing youth contrived to take
The span of your maidship's instep, all the while
His eyes upon your face—whence, as I live,
He never moved them till we left the shop,
Except to find the articles we ask'd for!—

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A youth misused of fate to set him, where
Behoved his betters rather wait than he!
A lofty forehead, like a marble dome
For princely thoughts to dwell in! eyes to court
Challenge of war or love, showing themselves
Frankly and boldly at their posts—a nose
Of the fine Grecian with a touch of Rome,
Elegance crown'd with strength; a mouth composed
Of lips were fashioned after Cupid's bow,
And, like it, made to send his arrow home.
Wing'd with their dulcet twang! Ambitious chin,
Dimpled and knobb'd like pattern Antinöus'!
There is his face, which well his neck and bust
Deserved; as for the rest of him, you know
The counter hid him from us.

*Lady Bl.* Counter-like,
In calculation of the drawback, doubtless,
His head and bust had suffer'd through the fault
Of his mis-shapen legs. I should not wonder
Had he clubb'd feet.

*Lady A.* Have you not seen his feet?
Come! Did you never on adventure go
A-shopping there again?

*Lady Bl.* Well, Anne, I did!
Again, and yet again.—Nay, do not laugh,
'Twas only to enjoy the goldsmith's blush!

*Lady A.* There, Blanche! Just now you could not find the shop!

*Lady Bl.* Well! things will jump into one's memory
When least we look for them. Why do you laugh?
Don't laugh, dear Anne, and I will tell you more!
I took the goldsmith to my milliner's
One day when he perforce would see me home:
A yeoman's daughter could not well, you know,
O'errule a goldsmith's son. Well, at the door
In vain I dropp'd him court'sy after court'sy,
In linsey-woolsey mode! He would not go.
"He must have speech with me a minute!"—"Nay!"
"Indeed he must,"—then said I, "Nay," again.
"He must in pity,"—Still did I say, "Nay."
But what's the use of "nay," said fifty times,

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If "yes" at last will come?—and come it did:
"He might have speech a minute!" What 's a minute?
A portion of an hour! A portion gone,
The hour is broken!—What's the value of
A broken thing?—as well he have the hour!
The hour he had! The goldsmith's son was smitten;
Love at first sight!—the arrow in the core!
Whereat the maid amused—it may be, pleased;
Touch'd, will you have it so.—Well, she was touch'd!—
Did after grant the goldsmith divers meetings,
Listening in silence to his rhapsodies
In rustic cloak, with hood drawn o'er her head,
Her face but half revealing! Till, at length,
Feeling a something—nothing like a passion!—
Perhaps an interest—yes; like that one watches
The progress of a pleasant story with,
But which indulging is but waste of time;
Having a horror, too, of slavery—
No matter how far out of reach of it;
And then, besides, admonish'd by my rank;
At last I took the resolution
To drop the masquerade—although, I own,
With some compunction.

*Lady A.* He deserved some.

*Lady Bl.* He!

Why, was he not a man!—He proved he was!
Made out his right and title.—Took his leave
Without good-bye, by word or yet by missive;
Since when I ne'er have met him. 'Twas as well,
Although it mortified me!—Nothing more.

*Lady A.* Who, think you, is come home? Sir Philip Brilliant.

When we have time, I'll let you hear a tale
Of him that does him honour. His adventure
Was likewise with a goldsmith's son.

*Lady Bl.* Perhaps
The same.—What was it?—Come, the heads of it!

*Lady A.* They chanced to quarrel; fought. His adversary,
Though wounded, would not own it, till almost
He dropp'd with loss of blood—whereat Sir Philip,

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Amazed and captivated, grew his friend ;
Took him abroad with him, and step by step
Has raised to his own rank. He comes with him,
This very evening, to pay visit to me,
And introduce the gentleman.

*Lady Bl.* His name ?

*Lady A.* I never thought to ask it !

*Lady Bl.* Should it be !

You and Sir Philip are good friends, it seems.
On me he has not call'd !

*Lady A.* He is your slave.
You have him at your foot whene'er you please ;
I own it has amazed me that a man,
So slight to contemplate, should have achieved
An act of generous manhood so robust
In healthy comeliness.

*Jane* [*entering*]. Sir Philip Brilliant.

*Enter* SIR PHILIP BRILLIANT *and* THOMAS *as* COLONEL BLOUNT.

*Lady A.* Welcome, Sir Philip.

*Sir Phil.* Colonel Blount, my friend.

*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. The goldsmith's son.

*Sir Phil.* Fair Lady Anne, I kiss
Your hand, and for my friend here, Colonel Blount,
Claim your acquaintance.

*Lady A.* [*to* LADY BLANCHE]. 'Tis the goldsmith's son !
He does not know you !

*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. How should he—he never
Beheld my face except beneath my hood,
How can he in the Countess find a trace
O' the simple yeoman's maid ? You 'll pardon me,
I must go home ! Good evening !—Go you to
The rout to-night, Sir Philip ?

*Sir Phil.* Yes.

*Lady Bl.* We'll meet ;
And I can answer for our host, he 'll thank you
To bring your friend.—Farewell.—Good morning, sir.
[*Goes out.*

*Lady A.* [*aside*]. She seems disturb'd

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*Sir Phil.* Fair Lady Anne, permit
My friend to write a line that asks despatch,—
Forgot on leaving home!
*Lady A.* The library!
Pray you step in and freely help yourself.
*Col. Blount.* I thank you, lady!—How resemblances,
The most remote, recal familiar things,
As in a ray of light one sees the sun!
Less than the ray unto the sun is she
That 's gone, to her whose image she recall'd,
And set before my mind as palpably,
As though the paragon stood there before me!
[*Goes out.*
*Sir Phil.* Dear Lady Anne, in your kind welcome back
I gladly miss'd your wonted scorn of me.
*Lady A.* Gladly!—why name it then to bring it back?
See what you 've done! What shall I call thee now?
Ware from the milliner's, the tailor's, or
The cordwainer's, or jeweller's, or what?
Thyself is the least part of thee! The man
Is trimmings to the dress.—Thou art a ruff
Of plaits elaborate and infinite;
Thy vest for curiosity of style,
Armour of diamonds upon velvet plaited,
Were better given a cabinet to keep
As theme for wonderment to after time,
Than left provision for the hungry air
That 's sure to eat it up! Thy jerkin runs
Enormous risk from thy ambition! trying
With satin slashes, ribbon-knots, and lace,
How close to woman's gear a man's may come,
And still appear a man's—thy trunks partake
Its divers sins; and for thy hose, who says,
In town or out of town, thou walk'st not in
A shrubbery, why let him own he is blind,
To save his credit for veracity!
Thy very rapier would abjure the man!
Its handle vouches for the laceman more
Than the cutler—nay, nor him beside alone;
'Twas plann'd in concert with a milliner!



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Which of the precious metals has the honour
To help it to a blade! It cannot be
A thing so exquisitely delicate
Could pair with homely steel?
*Sir Phil.* Give over!
*Lady A.* I will.
*Sir Phil.* I want a friend, dear Lady Anne.
*Lady A.* A friend?
And come you to a woman for a friend?
Better you seek a man.
*Sir Phil.* He cannot help me,
A woman can; she knows a woman's mind,
And how 'tis hit; which being done, they say,
Her heart's in jeopardy!
*Lady A.* Who say so? They
Who do not know her? Hit her heart, you are sure
Of her mind.
*Sir Phil.* No easy thing to do! For, now.
Three years and upwards have I tried to hit
The heart of Lady Blanche!
*Lady A.* I know you have.
*Sir Phil.* Three years are past, yet am I now as wide
As ever of the mark.
*Lady A.* Had you guess'd that
At setting out, what labour had you spared,
Or spent perhaps to more account, employ'd
On some one else! Sir Philip!
*Sir Phil.* Lady Anne?
*Lady A.* For three years have you been my fair acquaintance;
And if I err not, all that lapse of time
You have enjoy'd good health!
*Sir Phil.* Nay; no man better!
*Lady A.* Your appetite has never fail'd you?
*Sir Phil.* Never!
*Lady A.* So I should think!—You have always slept o' nights?
*Sir Phil.* From laying down my head to lifting it!
*Lady A.* Sound sleep?—No trouble in the shape of dreams?

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*Sir Phil.* None that I recollect.
*Lady A.* And yet in love!
And not successfully!—'Tis very strange!
*Sir Phil.* 'Tis very strange.
*Lady A.* Come, tell me how you feel
Towards Lady Blanche? What are the signs whereby
You know you love her, when you think of her?
Do you sigh very deeply?
*Sir Phil.* I'm not sure
That I do sigh at all—but I'm in love.
*Lady A.* You cannot be in love, unless you sigh.
*Sir Phil.* A man may sigh, without his knowing it.
*Lady A.* That's true. How feel you when another man
Detains her ear aloof?
*Sir Phil.* How feel I then?
How should I feel?
*Lady A.* Do you not purse your brows?
*Sir Phil.* No!
*Lady A.* No!—Do you not bite your lip?
*Sir Phil.* No!
*Lady A.* No?
Nor clench your hand?
*Sir Phil.* Nor clench my hand!—Why should I?
*Lady A.* Could you not knock him down?
*Sir Phil.* I'd like to know
For what?
*Lady A.* You would like to know for what? You are deep,
You are very deep in love. What would you do
With Lady Blanche, suppose you married her?
*Sir Phil.* Show her to court and town—go everywhere,
And take her with me, that the world might see
She that rejected scores of suits was mine.
*Lady A.* It is his vanity that loves, not he! [*aside.*]
No enterprise of danger then it seems
I help you in instructing you the way
To win the heart of lovely Lady Blanche!
*Sir Phil.* None.
*Lady A.* Should we fail, you are a sound man still;



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There is no fear of dying, falling sick,
Of loss of appetite, or sleep, or aught
Pernicious to your comfort?

*Sir Phil.* Not the least!

*Lady A.* If you should fail, you fail; if win, you win!
Indifferent which!

*Sir Phil.* Nay, I would rather win.

*Lady A.* [*aside*]. You ought, that covet it so heartily.

*Sir Phil.* Now, then, my lesson! What am I to do?

*Lady A.* 'Tis plain she likes you not, the man you are.

*Sir Phil.* 'Tis very plain.

*Lady A.* Then be another man.
This outlay of attire—this garniture
Of trimmings and of trinkets—looks not well
In certain women's eyes. It comes too near
Themselves.

*Sir Phil.* It does so!

*Lady A.* Change this gear at once.
Dress well, but let it be like other men,
Nothing particular—as if you'd say
"Look at me, ladies; how do you like me?" What
A question for a man! and do not speak
Between a simper and a lisp; it shames
A mouth with a beard; and don't tread mincingly:
'Tis bad enough in a woman,—what, then, in
A man! And in the act of courtesy
Give not your body such a sway, as though
It were a miracle the trunk and limbs
Did hold together; but in all your acts
Be simple and at home. You may gain much
And will lose nothing by it. Do you read?

*Sir Phil.* Occasionally, yes—by fits and starts.

*Lady A.* Latin and Greek?

*Sir Phil.* I have half forgotten them.

*Lady A.* Would you renew your memory there with me,
You are welcome. Call and let us read together.

*Sir Phil.* Dear Lady Anne, how good you are! We are friends?

*Lady A.* We are!

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*Sir Phil.* Then let me seal it on your hand.
I am almost loath to go!
*Lady A.* "Almost," no stop!
Keep ever to "almost," you are safe enough.
*Sir Phil.* I'll see what keeps my friend!
*Lady A.* I'll follow you!
*Sir Phil.* Yet, ere I go, I'll kiss your hand once more.
[*Goes out.*
*Lady A.* That man has got a heart and does not know it.
Nought of himself, save what his mirror shows him,
He sees. His eyes are shut to what he is,
Therein, where lie his nobler properties;
I'll open them and make a man of him!
Anne! what art thou about? Eschewest thou
His sex and hold'st companionship with him?
In charity!—nothing more! It would be strange
If, teaching him to woo fair Lady Blanche,
I chanced to cause him turn his eyes on me!
At the bare thought how takes my heart alarm!
Well! can I help it, comes it to that pass?
It is his own affair! and touching Blanche,
No heartscald 'tis to her! She loves him not.
My life upon it not without some cost,
Did Blanche return to sun her eyes again
I' th' blushing cheek of the young jeweller!
I wonder was it fancy, but I thought
Sir Philip blush'd on taking leave of me.
Those blushes are strange things! Upon my life,
One cannot think of them, but one feels strangely!
Well for him he's in love with Lady Blanche,
If bad his chance with her 'twere worse with me!
And yet I doubt if love for her he feels.
Love her three years, and never once fall sick,
Lack appetite, lose sleep—sound sleep! no dreams
To trouble it!—no hurricane of sighs.
Allow another lay close siege to her
And never purse his brow, nor bite his lip,
Nor clench his hand as he could knock him down;
He cannot be in love with Lady Blanche! [*Goes out.*

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## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*The Park.*

*Enter* ROBERT *and* CHARLOTTE.

*Rob.* This is the place!—'Tis now almost the hour!
Now—Lady Blanche!—forget the lady's maid,
And be the Countess. Bear yourself with height;
Incline your head in lieu of curtseying;
And that not over-much!—Be affluent
In airs!—As many graces as you can!
Do not forget your friends, Lords John and Stephen;
Let nothing trace them to the servants' room
That falls from thee! And pray you keep in mind
My baronetcy!—but through all your pride
Let admiration of this coxcomb shine,
As it behoves you to be smit with him!
They come.—Now prove yourself an actress.—Mark;
We 'll pass them first, then turn.—They know their cue.

*Enter* STEPHEN, JOHN, JACOB.

*Steph. and Jacob* [*as they cross*]. Good day!
*Rob. and Char.* [*very stately; crossing and going out*]. Good day!
*John* [*stopping the others.*] Is that the Countess?
*Steph.* Don't
Look back! 'Tis not the mode. We 'll turn anon,
The odds are ten to one they do the same.
[*They go out, then return;* ROBERT *and* CHARLOTTE *returning at the same time—both parties come to a stand.*
*Steph.* Good day again, Sir Philip.
*Rob.* Dear Lord John,
It is, indeed, a fair and sunny day!
Lord Stephen, how are you?—Your servant, sir!
*John.* Mean you not to present me?
*Steph.* Stay awhile!

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*Char.* [*half aloud to* ROBERT.] A monstrous handsome person that, Sir Philip.
*John.* She speaks, methinks, of me!
*Steph. and Jacob.* Be sure she does.
*John.* She is struck! Pray introduce me.—Nothing like
Clenching the nail at once!
*Steph.* My friend aspires
To know you, Lady Blanche!
*Char.* His grace is good.
*John.* She takes me for a duke!—Your Ladyship
O'errates, alas, my rank! I am not a duke.
*Char.* Alas,
Not for your lordship, but the rank which lacks
The pride of owning such an ornament.
*John.* She'll have me an earl, if I am not a duke.
I can't account for this!
*Steph.* 'Tis instinct, sir!
Like natures oft find one another out!
Though yet plain gentleman, I would not say
But you 're an earl or duke in embryo!
*John.* I have my own forebodings thereupon;
'Twere fit I undeceived her,—were it not?
Fair lady! neither duke nor earl am I.
*Char.* I must believe your looks against your words!
*John.* Nay, lady, trust my words against my looks!
*Rob.* Fair Lady Blanche, 'tis even as he says;
Afflict him not with incredulity,
For he is honest, even as well favour'd!
That noble presence—for it is, indeed,
No less than noble, as the evidence
Of feature, form, and bearing do attest—
Belongs to neither duke nor earl, but calls
A commoner its owner!
*Char.* Do you say so?
Nor duke not earl!—Is he a baronet?
*Rob.* Nor yet a baronet!
*John.* How very strong
The feeling of my quality is upon her!
*Char.* Who is your friend, and what?

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*Rob.* Lord John, how strangely
You introduced the gentleman! I vow
You never named him; so the ceremony
Must be perform'd again! Fair Lady Blanche,
Permit me to solicit your acquaintance
For Colonel Blount.
*Char.* For Colonel Blount!—Oh, no!
*Rob.* Indeed! indeed!
*Char.* I can't believe it.
*Rob.* True
As I'm a baronet.
*Steph.* Or I, a lord.
*Jacob.* Or I, another, or as your ladyship
Is Lady Blanche.
*Char.* Deny me Lady Blanche,
Deny that you are lords; Sir Philip, you
That you're a baronet; but tell me not
That gentleman is a colonel!—Colonel?—Fie!
Not he!
*John.* Does she suspect me, do you think?
I have my fears!
*Rob.* And so have I!
*John.* Indeed!
Were it not better then I stole away?
*Char.* A colonel! Fie, Sir Philip—fie, Lord John,
Lord Stephen! Play on my credulity!
Palm your friend on me for a colonel!
*John.* Clear
She penetrates the truth—I will be gone;
Don t stop me, dear Sir Philip.
*Char.* Colonel—Sir,
Are you a colonel?
*John* [*aside to Robert*]. What am I to say?
*Rob.* Put a bold face upon it!—Say at once
You would not contradict her!
*John* [*stammering*]. 'Twere offence
To say I am the thing your ladyship
Asserts me not to be!
*Char.* I knew 'twas so!
I knew he was no colonel!
*John.* I'm undone.

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*Char.* A colonel! does he look like one?—Why, friends,
You cannot use your eyes! Your friend must be
A general!
*John.* Give me joy! I breathe again,
Like one half drown'd that's to the surface brought!
I thank your ladyship for giving me
So high a rank! I am a general
In prospect!
*Rob.* Now you'll do. Propose to walk,
And offer her your arm.
*John.* Let me take time,
Scarce yet can I fetch breath.
*Rob.* Love's time is now!
It brooks not putting off! Love's time is when
It sees 'tis welcome. So you seem to be
And make your most of it. Surprise will take
The fort would mock a siege! Declare yourself,
And straight propose. You know the chance faint heart
Runs with fair lady!
*John.* Yes.
*Robert.* Then profit by
The adage. Sure you lack not courage.
*John.* Courage?
And with a woman!—Be there anything
Wherein I have the mastery beyond
All other things, 'tis courage with a woman!
Your ladyship.
*Char.* [*very stately*]. Sir!
[JOHN *is thrown off his guard.*
*Steph.* What is she about?
*Robert.* Let her alone. She better knows than you.
Without a little frost, a summer comes
With half a welcome.
*Char.* Sir? What would you say?
I think, or I'm deceived, you spoke just now.
Well, sir?
*John* [*at a loss*]. The day is marvellously fine.
*Char.* 'Tis June, sir.
*John.* June! So it is! Then the day
May well be fine without a miracle.



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*Char.* And yet for June the day is fine.
*John.* 'Twas that
I meant to say.
*Char.* A breezy day!
*John.* It is
A breezy day.
*Char.* Though warm.
*John.* Though warm.
*Char.* A day,
Methinks, to walk. Do you like walking, sir?
[*Putting her arm through his.*
*John.* Much, very much. It is a passion with me!
I love to walk—luxuriate in a walk!
And I walk well. So, please your ladyship,
If there 's one thing wherein I most excel,
'Tis walking.
*Char.* I should like to learn of you.
*John.* When? I am ready any time.
*Char.* Why, now;
Since I have placed my arm—I trust with leave—
In yours.
*John.* Now be it then. How proud I am
To wait upon your ladyship. I live
Only to please your sex.
*Char.* You flatter us.
*John.* Nay, Lady Blanche, 'tis simple honesty—
Mere honesty. If there 's a quality
Whereon, above all others, I presume—
*Char.* You need not tell me, Col. Blount—I know—
Am sure—could swear it. It is honesty.
[*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*The Antechamber to a Ball-Room.*

*Enter* LADY BLANCHE.

*Lady Bl.* He knows me not at all!—His memory,
Far as concerns me, is a perfect blank,
And in his heart not e'en a spark remains,
To mind me of the love he bore me when
I seem'd a yeoman's maid. She is forgot

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But I'll avenge her! and enslave his heart
Before he knows his danger. Twice or thrice
We spoke in passing. In his eye I saw
No witness to the charms which all allow!—
But soon shall he attest them to his cost.
He comes!—I'll hold him now in spite of him;
Find out his vulnerable part—all men
That have free hearts are somewhat vulnerable!—
Propitiate his vanity, his pride,
Humour—whate'er sways uppermost; and then
Right to his heart, and win the citadel
Which, mine, who lists may keep.—He comes!—In thought!

*Enter* COLONEL BLOUNT.

Well, Colonel Blount, I saw you dance just now.
Come, sir, sit down, and tell me how you liked
Your partner, sir—a special friend of mine!
*Col. Blount.* A lady worthy praise.
*Lady Bl.* Did you admire
Her diamonds?—Mine are paragons to them! [*Aside.*
They are very rich!—Perhaps you do not care
For gems?—No more do I!—But what of that?
The world does! What are you and I against
The world?—I know what you would say! One's self
May be one's world, or one may light upon
Another self outweighs the world! That self
When I shall find, farewell the world for me!
The diamonds I could prize were shining thoughts,
Mined in the heart of one that I could love!
[*Aside.*] A shaft shot straight and should go home.—
He's struck!
If struck, he should be stung! The deer is charm'd!
The skill I try on him, I throw away!
I'll give it over! At the first shot? No,
The quiver yet is full. What ponders he?
[*Aloud.*] Where are your thoughts, sir?
*Col. Blount.* Lady, close at hand,
Whene'er you call them to attend upon you.
*Lady Bl.* Attendance willing waits not to be call'd,
But still forestals the summons, still attends!

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Not that I claim such servitude from one
That's but my new acquaintance! By and by
Perhaps I may be more observed—and more
May wish to be so. There are scores of men
Who watch my looks to worm my wishes from them,
And do them ere they are told! But what are scores
That don't include the unit which we want?
Found I that unit, farewell scores of scores—
Nay, farewell millions! It were more to me!
I think the day will come – nay, I believe
'Tis nearer than I thought it yesterday,
When first I made your fair acquaintance, sir!
[*Aside.*] The man's a stock! He cannot hear! I'll try
If he can see! [*Aloud.*] Where are your thoughts
again?
*Col. Blount.* Here, madam, your retainers.
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] Such retainers
Might wait upon my grandmother for me!
[*Aloud.*] The lady's forehead you were dancing with,
They say, a strong resemblance bears to mine.
Does it? 'Tis not so high by half an inch [*Aside*].
Well, sir?
*Col. Blount.* I am thinking, madam,
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] Thinking, when
He should be looking! Where are the man's eyes?
Poring upon his feet—and mine beside them!
*Col. Blount.* I own I cannot see the likeness.
*Lady Bl.* [*Aloua.*] I
Should wonder if you did! [*Aloud.*] I do not think
Our foreheads much alike—mine, I believe,
Somewhat exceeds in height! Do you think it does?
*Col. Blount.* I think it does a little.
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] Half an inch
A little in the forehead! Pshaw! He knows not
What he is saying! [*Aloud.*] Sir, are you listening
to me?
*Col. Blount.* With all my ears!
*Lady Bl.* Then all, I fear, all lack!
[*Aside.*] I will transfix him with my arms! They say
That that same lady has surpassing arms!
*Col. Blount.* She wears surpassing bracelets!

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*Lady. Bl.* Like you not
A lady should wear bracelets?
*Col. Blount.* I like nothing
Would supersede the handiwork of Nature!
Why mask the graceful wrist? Stopp'd Nature there,
Instead of going on consummately
To the fair finish, what would you have said?
Art is a gracious handmaid to work on,
Where her high mistress, Nature, fails; but thence
Is a poor critic who but shames himself
Improving what 's complete!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] He is roused at last!
I have found his vein. He shall not nod again.
[*Aloud.*] My bracelets hurt.—The clasps are very stiff.
I pray you help me take them off! I 'll never
Wear them again.—Now, sir, your eyes are mine.
[*Aside.*
*Col. Blount* [*holding her hand, and contemplating the bracelet*]. 'Tis wonderful!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] He perches and is limed—my saucy linnet!
How light you made just now of the poor bush,
A spray of which has caught you!
*Col. Blount* [*still holding, &c.*]. Art, beat that!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] She can't!
*Col. Blount* [*still holding her hand*]. Or find the thing that will comprise
Such richness in ten thousand times the space!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] He has found out at last I have an arm,
We'll live in hopes he will find out anon
I have a face as well!
*Col. Blount.* Why, caracts thus
Might weigh almost 'gainst kingdoms.
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] Caracts!—What
Have arms to do with caracts?
*Col. Blount.* Multiply
The grains of each of these a thousand fold,
And let the bulk grow with them, you will have
The income of an empire in the space
That spans this little wrist!

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*Lady Bl.* Mean you my diamonds?
Sir, you were 'prentice to a lapidary!
*Col. Blount.* I know I was.
*Lady Bl.* Then, having left your craft,
You should forget it.
*Col. Blount.* 'Twas an honest one;
And, though I loved it not, I blush not for it!
*Lady Bl.* What kind of man is this?—I am forgetful! [*Aside.*
I have been ungenerous and ask your pardon!
*Col. Blount.* Pardon!—O no! impossible!—a lady
Must never ask for pardon!
*Lady Bl.* You forgive me?
*Col. Blount.* I will when you offend me!
*Lady Bl.* Then we are friends.
*Col. Blount.* Then I am happy!
*Lady Bl.* You are a soldier, sir.
Tell me of your exploits. I love brave men,
And hear their deeds with pleasure.
*Col. Blount.* Had I deeds
To speak of, I had rather others told them.
*Lady Bl.* Come, sir, what is a battle?
*Col. Blount.* Glory, madam,
In a just cause, but at the best bought dearly
When men destroy their brother men, like them
Framed in the image of their common Maker!
*Lady Bl.* You would fight again?
*Col. Blount.* I would, to serve my country!
But should be glad she needed not such service.
We must have wars, if others will provoke us,
And ever then, I trust, act gallantly,
As men that loathe aggression!—but, I hope,
That golden age will come—'tis promised us.—
When men will fear their God and live like men,
To brutes resigning carnage.
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] He o'ertowers me
In all he thinks and feels!—I grow to fear him!
He has his weaknesses!—who is without them?
I'll find them out!—he is nothing but a man!
Soldiers live merrily, they say, in quarters—
[*Aloud.*] You don't refuse your glass!

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*Col. Blount.* Nor yet abuse it;
Unless, perhaps a joyous time or two
When men make holiday, and open hearts
Would shut at my defection—yet e'en then,
Keep somewhat within compass!—Do believe me,
And for my credit press me not too closely.
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] How honest is he! if I prove him further,
I almost fear to find myself a knave!
Yet I'll go on! [*Aloud.*]—Soldiers, I have heard, love play.
You play?
*Col. Blount.* At times; and then for the suspense
That chance creates—that mistress none can fix,
Who from the sharper's clasp escapes as well
As his who woos her with fair gallantry!
I never gamble.
*Lady Bl.* How can you refrain?
*Col. Blount.* With thought of what a paltry act it is!
To say the least, it never can consist
With proper manhood to enjoy the thing
Was not one's own an hour ago, and chance,
Not his own merit, now has won him! Then,
To wax rich by another's poverty!
My pillow for the sleep it giveth me
To rob another man's!—How could I lay
My head upon it?—when I feast, the bread
That loads my board, to leave another's bare,
Ay of a crust perhaps!—How could I touch it?
To go abroad and show the witness sun
My fulness at such destitution bought
As robs that sun of light and heat to one
Who yesterday rejoiced in them and bless'd them!
Can he who games have feeling?—yes, he may!
But better in my mind he had it not!
For I esteem him preferable far,
In rate of manhood, that has not a heart
Than he that has, and makes vile use of it!
The one is traitor unto nature, which
The other can't be call'd!—Were it my lot
In some unguarded moment of caprice,

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Forgetfulness, or aught that renders one
Unlike one's-self—Were it in such a lapse
My lot to win a fortune—ere I slept
I must disgorge my gains, that the next day
I might awake a man!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside*]. He is a man!
Where am I?—What am I about? I fear
I have found a master where I sought a slave.
Heigho!—methinks I could look up to him,
Give him obedience, would he in exchange
Give me his heart!—But is it his to give?
I'll try, yet fear to try!—[*Aloud.*] Soldiers are lovers
Some men are women-haters—are you one?
*Col. Blount.* I honour women.
*Lady Bl.* But I spoke of loving
Say all men love; yet love not all alike.
Some men love lightly, others seriously,
Some last, some change—which way of these love you?
*Col. Blount.* Indeed you puzzle me!
*Lady Bl.* You are afraid
To answer!
*Col. Blount.* No!—If you take my answer—
I love for ever if I love at all!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] I see!—He never loved the yeoman's maid.
[*Aloud.*] What call you loving?
*Col. Blount.* Blissful cherishing!
Of our own happiness that makes a casket
Wherein to keep a treasured other's safe!
He who loves lightly does not love at all,
He only thinks he loves!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside.*] So loved he when
He loved the yeoman's maid!
*Col. Blount.* There is more of Heaven
In that sweet mood than such a man e'er dream'd of!
Love lightly!—Love is nothing, if its root
Pierces the surface only of the heart!
It must dive to the core, then what will pluck it out
With fibres so embedded! It may happen
The object is forgetful; but what then,
If 'tis found out too late?—The soil hath given

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Its richest spirits to the growth.—'Tis spent!—
I don't believe that heart can love again!
I am sure it cannot!
*Lady Bl.* [*Aside*]. He will steal my heart
Before my face, and all against my will,
Nor give me hold of his.—I must break off
This converse! [*Aloud.*] Sir, I thank you for the time
You have wasted on me! We have talk'd of trifles,
But pleasantly—nay, very pleasantly!
You are going? A good night—a kind good night.
I am glad of your acquaintance—will shake hands
If you please! I have tired you, have I not?—Don't answer;
I know you must deny.
*Col. Blount.* I do so frankly.
*Lady Bl.* I thank you frankly then, and so good night. [COLONEL BLOUNT *goes out.*
How changed I feel!—I do not know myself!
Changed!—He shall change. I 'll bring him to his knee!
I wonder what he thinks of me?—I 'll plan
A snare for him shall show me.—He did not kiss
My hand!—and, when I gave it him, almost
I held it to his lips!—One thing is certain,
The yeoman's maid is free to love for him!
How I deceived myself, to think one moment
The man was any other than a man!
How very soon I have disabused myself!
To-morrow shall unfold!—not kiss my hand!
I could have sworn he would have kiss'd my hand!
[*Goes out.*

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## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*The House of* LADY ANNE.—*A Room.*

*Enter* LADY ANNE.

*Lady A.* He thrives beyond my hopes! Leave an old maid
Alone to make a man, reforming him
After the fashion likes her. Women prate
Who talk of conquest while they stoop to love!
What's sway for sway but mere equality
Wherein the party least deserves to rule—
And that, past all dispute, is man, the lord!—
Ne'er rests till he disturbs the perfect poise,
Into his own scale throws his might—that good
Wherein the brute hath mastery o'er him—
And to the beam heaves up the counter one,
To hang there at his will!—Had women but
The thews of men! My very girlhood solved
The riddle of their sovereignty!—Brought up
With two male cubs of cousins, was not I
A likely one the relative deserts
Of women and of men to put to proof?
And didn't I?—I beat them to a stand!
We started all together! Where were they
When I could read?—Why, in the spelling-book!
When I was in subtraction where were they?
A cudgelling their brains to cast a sum
Of ten lines in addition! I could rhyme
My tables backwards, while they fought with pounds,
Shillings and pence, that kept the upper hand
And laugh'd at them for masters! I could parse,
While they on footing of most shy acquaintance
Kept with their parts of speech! In one thing only
I found I met my betters—and e'en there
I tried them, though I came off second best—
I could not beat them when they quarrell'd with me!
Because they held my hands!—They were afraid

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To fight me!—But Sir Philip thrives apace,
And all of my performing!—And what pains
He takes to please me, with his air, his gait,
His dress, and most of all his books! How fond
He is of study! I'll do all I can
To encourage him!—At last, he'll make a man!

*Enter* JANE.

Well, Jane.

*Jane.* One asks to see your ladyship,
Whose forward manners call his years most backward.
He looks but twenty, may you trust his chin,
But should be thirty and no minute wasted.
He told his will, nor gave me time to answer,
But, making of his arms a pillory,
Began to kiss me, madam! Smack on smack,
Quick as the clapper of the 'larum bell
That ne'er gives o'er before the weight is down,
Like him who still held on till out of breath!

*Lady A.* Hadst not a tongue, girl, to let loose upon him?

*Jane.* I had, my lady; but my lips were stopp'd.

*Lady A.* But when your lips were free!

*Jane.* The harm was done!

*Lady A.* I will not see him!

*Jane.* He is at the door!

*Lady A.* Shut it! Go ring the bell!

*Lady Bl.* [*entering disguised as a man*]. And if she does,
I'll ring the changes on her lips again.

*Lady A.* Go call my footman!

*Lady Bl.* If she bears them spite,—
For I shall trounce them soundly, if they come;
I'll ring the bell; but mark the consequence,
Footmen or maids, I'll kiss you spite of them,
Before their faces! Be they maids that come,
I'll kiss the maids as well.—You see my mood;
So, be you squeamish, take me by yourself
And leave the bell alone!

*Jane.* Shall I ring, my lady?

*Lady A.* No, don't!

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*Lady Bl.* You hear!—You mark?—You know
your cue?
You have not been yon lady's maid in vain?
You 're of no use!—Why loiter here!—Begone!
*Lady A.* I can command my maid myself!
*Lady Bl.* You can!
But better now that I command than you,
For on rebellion clearly is she bent,
Seeing her absence leaves us two alone!
By all the arrows ever Cupid shot,
By all the hearts that ever rued his bow,
Thou art jealous of thy mistress!
*Jane.* Sir!
*Lady Bl.* Thou art!
Thou wouldst we still were standing in the hall;
Thou wouldst my errand there were still to tell;
Thou wouldst the vails I gave thee in advance
Were still to pay—yea, thou wouldst give them back
To have them paid again! I am willing—but
There is a time—there is a place—and this
Is neither place, nor time—avoid thee, then!
For, were my love the fraught of twenty men,
Yet of one man I cannot well make two,
And though the lady's beauty tracks the maid's,
Yet must the lady's self precedence take!
So, Fondness!—leave the room!—Nay then—
*Jane* [*retreating from Lady Blanche*]. I am gone.
[*Goes out.*
*Lady A.* How wrong may thrive by sheer audacity,
While, with amaze, propriety gives way
Before the thing she scorns!
*Lady Bl.* Give me a kiss!
*Lady A.* A kiss!—I never yet gave kiss to man!
*Lady Bl.* You have kiss'd me many a time! Women
forget
Their girlhood days! Their lofty age o'erlooks
Such tiny things!
*Lady A.* Kiss'd thee!
*Lady Bl.* When we have stroll'd
Along green lanes in honeysuckle time,
With thrilling throats mocking the merry birds:

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When we have chased each other 'mong the sheaves,
Whose ears have lent us gold to make us crowns;
When, forced to keep the house in winter, of
Our plays we have made fires to warm ourselves;
Or when we have coax'd spring on with primroses,
Till hedge-rows leaved, and trees were all a-bloom!
I have kiss'd thee all these times, not to recount
How often we have sat on the same chair,
Or made a chair of one another's lap,
On the same carpet roll'd—slept in one bed!

*Lady A.* [*shrieks*]. Ah!

*Lady Bl.* You may shriek.—There was no shrieking then—

In short, were comates more than hand or glove,
For still were we together!—Kiss me, Anne!

*Lady A.* Hoa! help!

*Lady Bl.* Why don't you know me, simpleton?

*Lady A.* Blanche!

*Lady Bl.* [*bowing*]. At your service.

*Lady A.* What may this forebode?

*Lady Bl.* Why, victory! I cannot tell thee now!
I came to put my masquerade to proof!

*Lady A.* 'Tis excellent!

*Lady Bl.* And so, in verity
You took me for a man!

*Lady A.* In verity.

*Lady Bl.* The dress becomes me?—Eh?

*Lady A.* To admiration!

*Lady Bl.* Is not my carriage very like a man's?
Have I not caught his tyrant strut?

*Lady A.* You have!

*Lady Bl.* The style with which he bears his empty head?

*Lady A.* You have!

*Lady Bl.* His frown when he would scare a man?

*Lady A.* You have.

*Lady Bl.* His smile when he would please a woman?

*Lady A.* You have.

*Lady Bl.* When thus I poise me on one foot,
Planting at ease the other, with one hand
In my breast, the other at my side, with arm

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Akimbo, say you were not in my secret,
Would you not take your oath I was a man?
*Lady A.* I would!
*Lady Bl.* 'Twill do! Kiss me, dear Anne, again!
*Lady A.* I hear a step.
*Lady Bl.* Keep quiet, will you, Anne!
*Jane* [*running on*]. Madam—O la!
[*Stopping short at seeing* LADY ANNE *with her head on* LADY BLANCHE'S *shoulder, while* LADY BLANCHE *kisses her.*
*Lady Bl.* How envy stops her breath!
You need not go—we do not mind you—well!
Your errand—if you have one? Much I doubt
'Twas jealousy that brought you back again!
*Lady A.* [*still lolling on* LADY BLANCHE]. What is it, Jane?
*Lady Bl.* You see we 're quite at home
With one another. Well, what is it, sweetheart!
*Jane.* Sir Philip Brilliant waits to see my lady.
*Lady Bl.* Show him up stairs.
*Jane.* Well, if I ever dream'd—
*Lady Bl.* She scarce can move for very spite—Begone! [JANE *goes out.*
*Lady A.* What shall be done?
*Lady Bl.* Done?—Let them show him up!
I am sure I make as good a man as he is!
How changed Sir Philip is!—How grave he grows!
I half believe my empire there is done!—
Why staid you yester' evening from the ball?—
I ne'er saw man so alter'd as Sir Philip!
He thinks! He does! Looks pensive, as I live!
What brings him here, dear Anne?
*Lady A.* [*hesitating.*] To learn of me
How to make love to you.
*Lady Bl.* Learn to make love
To me! How long since you have open'd school?
You ne'er gave lesson on that art before!
But wit does wonders on emergency!—
Anne!—They say teachers learn the while they teach!
Take care!—Amercy, where 's your old maid's dress?
What do you teach Sir Philip?

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*Lady A.* We read Latin
Together.
*Lady Bl.* Anne!—I can translate your Latin
Better than you can. Here your pupil comes!

*Enter* SIR PHILIP.

An o'ergrown boy, methinks, to go to school!
But such a one, if once he takes to tasks,
Makes progress.—Pays he thee in coin or kind?
Coin!—No such item in the schedule broad
Of love's estate, composed of things as light
As sunshine!—air!—the odour air exhales!
The softest sound it lends its limber wing!
Not that it always, yet, escheweth things
More tangible, begot of hands and lips!
Farewell! I never saw so clear a dawn!
*Lady A.* Dawn? It is day.
*Lady B.* 'Tis dawn will grow to day!
I tell thee, Anne, 'twas e'en Aurora's self
That now I spied—that early, modest maid
Who opes the curtains of the sleeping sun,
And, blushing, flies his gaze! Permit my lips
To press your hand.—Now, mark my bow! [*Aside.*]
Adieu!
[LADY BLANCHE *bows to* SIR PHILIP, *and goes out.*
*Sir Phil.* [*uneasily*]. A handsome youth!
*Lady A.* Umph! Well enough!
*Sir Phil.* He seems
An old acquaintance, for he kiss'd your hand
Right lovingly!
*Lady A.* I have known him rather long.
*Sir Phil.* I would I had not come!
*Lady A.* Why, prithee?
*Sir Phil.* As
My call was out of time.
*Lady A.* Not so, Sir Philip,
The gentleman was just about to go.
*Sir Phil.* I am glad I came not sooner.
*Lady A.* Had you, sir,
'Twere all the same to me—except the pleasure
Of seeing you had been some minutes older!

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*Sir Phil.* You make me happy.

*Lady A.* What's the matter with him?
Sir Philip cannot be in love with me!
Yet Lady Blanche would so insinuate—
Hang her! To note my cheek!— It had not burn'd
Except through her!—Why, what a world it is!
What wicked thoughts come into people's heads!
Behoves I watch myself!—We meet too often!
We are too much alone—O far too much!
His tasks must end, if he begins to love!
He has not told me so!—I'll wait till then!
I wonder, was he pensive as she said,
Or did she fancy it? Sir Philip.

*Sir Phil.* Madam?

*Lady A.* I pray you, how went off the ball last night?

*Sir Phil.* Oh, admirably well!

*Lady A.* I knew it! She
Was jesting! I hate jests! Nine times in ten
They are out of season! 'Twas a pleasant evening?

*Sir Phil.* Very!

*Lady A.* I knew it!—What can change a man
In a moment!—Can he doff himself as soon
As his coat? The days of miracles are over!
And so you pass'd a very pleasant evening?
Whom danced you with—the Countess?

*Sir Phil.* Nobody.

*Lady A.* You play'd at cards — who was your partner? She?

*Sir Phil.* No one!

*Lady A.* They gave you music?—You can sing:
I have heard you sing a second to the Countess—
A capital second!—I was pleased with it,
That am not moved with trifles!—Did you sing
Last night together?

*Sir Phil.* No; I sang with no one.

*Lady A.* A solo then?

*Sir Phil.* I did not sing at all!

*Lady A.* Singing is very well in its way; but many
Love conversation better.

*Sir Phil.* Very many!

*Lady A.* For mine own part, give me a corner, with

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A friend I love to talk with, and the song
May hold its peace for me!
*Sir Phil.* I feel as you do!
*Lady A.* The Countess can talk well.
*Sir Phil.* Surprisingly—
*Lady A.* When she likes it. Was she in the vein last night?
*Sir Phil.* I did not note!—I saw not much of her.
I was not in the vein for company.
*Lady A.* Pray you, Sir Philip, who were at the ball?
*Sir Phil.* Upon my word, I scarce remember who!
I better could recal who was not there!
*Lady A.* Who was not there?
*Sir Phil.* Why, you!
*Lady A.* [*aside*]. That sounds like love!
'Tis well I be upon my guard in time!
Repel the foe before he can make head!
Yet to be like a thing, is not to be
The thing itself! It may not, yet, be love.
The enemy I take up arms against
Myself may conjure up!—alarums sound,
Where no attack is meant—That would be hard
On him!—to lose, without a crime, the friend
He stands so much in need of—then the credit
I must forego, if I forego the task
I took in hand, to make a man of him!
See how he cons his lesson like a boy!
[*Aloud.*] Get the desk ready—I shall follow you.
*Sir Phil.* Here is a passage, like to master me.
Each word I know, yet can't divine the sense!
*Lady A.* Show it me. Dear Sir Philip, you forget
Your syntax! Here is an ellipsis, sir!
*Sir Phil.* An ellipsis?
*Lady A.* Yes; look at that genitive!
It stands alone! What governs it, Sir Philip?
*Sir Phil.* The noun is understood!—I have found the sense;
Yet wits, more quick, miss seeing things as plain!
*Lady A.* [*aside*]. What does he mean?
*Sir Phil.* The want is profit to me,
Of such instructress put me so in need,



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I progress !—Will gets through a heap of work!
Dear Lady Anne, I love to read with you ! [*Goes out.*

*Lady A.* He loves to read with me! were it charity
If that I construed into loving me?
He stands too much in awe of me to love me!
But, say he does—what business is't of mine?
Let him look to it—I have not the fever,
He caught it not from me. I'm in sound health,
Was never half so well! my mind sees clearer!
My heart feels lighter. I am twice myself———
He loves not any one !—or if he does,
'Tis clear as open day 'tis not the Countess ! [*Goes out.*

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## SCENE II.—Colonel Blount's *House.—A Room.*

*Enter* Colonel Blount.

*Col. Blount.* Mine honour'd parents have I seen at last!
Received their welcome, with their blessing crown'd!
My brother mocks my search—and so does she
Whom to have lost, makes loss of fortune's gains.
Nor hope nor clue to hope! The house whereat
We used to meet hath other tenant got,
The former gone they know not whither; if
Alive or dead! For hours and hours I walk
The streets in vain! she never crosses me.
I light on all the world but her I seek!

*Enter* William.

*Wil.* A gentleman would speak with you.
*Col. Blount.* His name?
*Wil.* I ask'd his name, and in reply he told me
Again his errand—wonder'd how my master
Could keep a male attendant at his door,
And maids to hire in bunches !—any one
Of whom could draw the bolt as well!—would look
A thousand times more pleasing—speak more sweetly,
And, maybe, when a pretty fellow call'd
With kisses season answers—then with a stamp
Dismiss'd me.

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*Lady Blanche* [*entering still disguised*]. Colonel
Blount, your humble servant!
Place chairs! excuse the freedom! I am at home
Whene'er I light upon a gentleman,
And you, I know, are one!—You know your place, sir,
And know, of course, the way to it—which, as
I take it, is the hall!—you understand me?
The hall! [WILLIAM *goes out.*] Your servant, Colonel
Blount, again!
*Col. Blount.* You know me, sir?
*Lady Bl.* A man beloved of fame, sir,
Is known to many who are strange to him.
I own that I make bold; but keep your frown
Until I give my reason. Colonel Blount,
Some men make bold through fear, some through the
lack on 't.
Some to seem honest—for the adage runs,
That knavery puts on a glossy suit
While honesty goes rough!—and some make bold
Through lightness of dear hearts and wantonness
Of healthy frankness!—I am such a man!
To free your mind at once from jealousy,
If not to win your confidence, I tell you
I wait on you—touching a lady, sir!—
He takes it very coolly [*aside*]. Colonel Blount,
I wait on you, touching a lady, sir!
*Col. Blount.* I heard you, sir—I am not deaf.
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. As well
Be deaf as dull. The lady, sir, I am sure,
By certain signs affects you—and, aware
How through reserve, or self-mistrust, or something,
Hearts form'd to mingle oft miss one another,
And being of the lady's blood partaker,
And knowing you, by fame, a man of honour,
The secret I have guess'd, sir, I have come
To tell you, sir.
*Col. Blount.* Well, sir?
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. The man 's a stock!
"Well, sir!"—shall I go on? I will!—but only
Because I have begun. Whom reckon you
The beauty of the court?



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*Col. Blount.* The beauty ?
*Lady Bl.* [*off her guard*]. Well ?
*Col. Blount.* Your patience, sir, I am not skill'd in beauty ;
Perhaps I may mistake.
*Lady Bl.* [*again off her guard*]. You do not know
The beauty of the court ?
*Col. Blount.* To say the truth,
I lay light value upon beauty only.
Then is it hard to say what beauty is.
You like the Roman outline, I the Grecian—
Where 's beauty ? Beauty, may I trust report,
Hath somewhat questionable reputation, too !
Some say it is intolerably proud ;
Some, empty—full of nothing but itself ;
Some, by no means good-temper'd—some assert
'Tis mercenary and not over honest :
This may, in part, be spleen, but part is truth.
Whence am I jealous of what men call beauty,
And own it—but when beauty, modestly,
Attends the mind, like a fair handmaiden
Who knows her place, and serves a noble mistress,
Then could I worship beauty, sir ; for then
Its proper worth not only doffs no favour,
But wins enhancement from the worth it waits on !
*Lady Bl.* Had you not, Colonel Blount, some time or other
A falling out with beauty ? Come ! You had ;
She slighted you one time—I know she did !
But 'twas your own fault—I 'll be bound it was !
You did not manage well, sir. You were proud—
Lack'd patience—maybe, art—and never dreaming
That beauty's smiles go oft in masquerade,
Took one for a frown, and off !—when, had you tarried,
The thing you thought a frown had proved a smile,
As the dull morning breeds the sunny day.
I know the sex : there is not one of them
But 's art in something !
*Col. Blount.* Do not say, not one !
*Lady Bl.* [*forgetting herself*]. I say, not one ! What know you of the sex ?

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What knows this man—that man—or any man—
Of the sex? Is it not plain to all the world,
A girl at fifteen is in wit a woman?
And what's a man at twenty but a boy?
When I was only thirteen—
*Col. Blount.* Sir!—
*Lady Bl.* Nay, sir,
Don't interrupt me!—When I was but thirteen—
[*Recovering herself.*
I had an aunt who loved me passing well,
And lest I should be overmatch'd by women,
School'd me in all their arts.—You never had
An aunt like her, nor any other man,
Whence I disparaged you—I beg your pardon!
*Col. Blount.* 'Tis granted freely.
*Lady Bl.* I am beholden to you;
And, more to be so, would entreat you own,
If when I challenged you to name just now
The beauty of the court, you entertain'd not
Suspicion of the lady?
*Col. Blount.* Not the least!
*Lady Bl.* Why, Colonel Blount, you are not blind!
You know
Who has the fairest skin, the finest hair—
The finest features, finest shoulders, arms
And wrists, and hands.
*Col. Blount.* Stop, sir!
*Lady Bl.* I meant to stop,
For if by these you fail to recognise her,
The lady's waist, her ancles, and her feet
Were thrown away upon you!
*Col. Blount.* I but stopp'd you
To say I know the Countess, Lady Blanche!
*Lady Bl.* Well, sir?
*Col. Blount.* Well, sir?
*Lady Bl.* I come on her account.
*Col. Blount.* You were welcome, sir, upon your own account!
Your pleasure?
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. I could brain him, so I could!
[*Aloud.*] She is the lady whom I spoke of, sir!—
[*Aside.*] Oh, marble! is it true you see and hear?

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I'll speak out plainly! [*Aloud.*] Sir, I think 'tis time
The Countess married?—What think you?
*Col. Blount.* Indeed
I never thought about it!
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. I could sell him
To slavery!—'Tis a fine lion, though,
Of which I'd give my eyes to have the taming!
[*Aloud.*] I think 'tis time a woman marries when
She takes a fancy to a man!
*Col. Blount.* That plight,
Methinks, can scarce befal the Countess, sir!
The lady is enamour'd of herself!
She cannot love another!
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. I could be
The death of him. [*Aloud.*] What would you wager, now,
She is not in love with you? You know the signs
A woman is in love? She has them all, sir!
Thinks much, speaks little, sighs incontinently,
Falls off in appetite, hates company,
Shuns pleasure, loves to pass the time alone,
Makes of one hand a pillow for her cheek,
One for her heart of the other—sitting thus
For hours together!—Is not that the picture
Of one in love? And if you come to tears,
She could weep rivers, would she—but give me
The drop, could turn into a flood—but won't,
Hangs on the lid as though 'twould fall—but doesn't;
Seems as 'twould ever stay there, but is gone
You know not how nor whither!
*Col. Blount.* You surprise me!
I saw the Countess at the ball last night—
Look'd never woman better!
*Lady Bl.* Look'd!—
*Col. Blount.* I know
She paints.
*Lady Bl.* Paints, sir?
*Col. Blount,* She does! 'Tis clear
As that she breathes and moves.
*Lady Bl.* Does that offend you?
*Col. Blount.* Sir, I'll be frank! I love not simulation,
Nor can believe it may be practised safely
E'en in as small a thing as that we speak of!

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'Tis well when she who paints confesses it;
Yet she confesses vanity besides,
Which is not well. But, for the other sort,
Women who pass a cheek for what it is not;
I always fear'd the probity, within,
Would follow that without; and thoughts and words
Might wear a hue that was not native to them.
For, if one fraud will blast a character,
What follows but that honesty is perfect,
Or nothing?—holds throughout?—is everywhere
Or nowhere?—I refer to actions!—'Tis
Their actions which determine what men are!
Whate'er of me men see must be myself;
What I myself do see—I do not mean
To advertise my heart—that is no man's duty—
I have my weakness I'm not bound to own—
Before it masters me!—but, by my honour,
I take no credit for the grace I have not!

*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. 'Tis a strange man!—a man of a new species!

[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, she paints!—What else?—What other fault
Do you find with her face? Her colour you dispute,—
Perhaps you 'll grant her eyes to be her own,
And they are counted fine ones!

*Col. Blount.* They are bold ones!

*Lady Bl.* Bold ones!—You do not like their fire perhaps?
You should not, could it scorch you! [*Aside.*

*Col. Blount.* Not their fire
Do I complain of. 'Tis the mood that lights it
I quarrel with!

*Lady Bl.* What mood? [*Aside*]. I grow to hate him!

*Col. Blount.* The mood of the coquette—whom on my honour
I hold 'mongst women an anomaly!
For, much as you disparaged woman now,
Making her creature more or less of art!
I think, if not in her, then nowhere else
Is truthful nature found; for she is framed
Of elements she needs not blush to own,

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Being of the temper less of earth than heaven !
And which, perforce, establish her sincere—
Pitiful—modest—and, surpassing all,
Single in love, which is Heaven's prototype !
Her love is love ! Therein she is a barque
Sea-worthy 'gainst all weathers ! likelier
Than any prow that ever quitted port
To make her voyage, whatsoe'er the wind,
And, if it blows, to ride the tempest through !
*Lady Bl.* He is not so bad ! How handsome look'd he now,
More than his features warrant him, as though
The charm of beauty lay not in the face !
*Col. Blount.* Now, what has a coquette to such a being
Pertaining ? Form and feature ! Nothing more !
Of woman the least part ! She cannot love ;
For woman, loving, cannot breathe or move,
Or think, or feel, but love 's in all she does !
And, saying that she cannot love, say what
She can do, to her honour will redound ?
I know not, sir ; do you ?
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. Yes ; she can hate,
And heartily.—Why, what a fright I took
For a good-looking man !
*Col. Blount.* The Countess now—
*Lady Bl.* So please you, we shall speak no more about her !
[*Aside.*] I wonder is he smit with any other—
[*Aloud.*] Excuse a question, sir !—Are you in love ?
*Col. Blount.* Yes, sir, I am—but love, I fear, in vain.
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. In vain ? Some prude perhaps has snared his heart.
I hope she has ! [*Aloud.*] Is not your love return'd ?
*Col. Blount.* I know not !—I would fain believe it was.
*Lady Bl.* Believe it was ?—What ! dropp'd she never word
That Hope could make a meal of ?
*Col. Blount.* Never.—Silence
Was still her answer when I press'd my suit.
*Lady Bl.* A prude, as I'm alive ! a thorough prude !
I know what kind of maid your mistress is !

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She keeps you at great distance! plucks away
Her hand, if you press it—if you strive to keep
Her waist in durance, sets the measure of
The room 'twixt you and her; and would you kiss her,
Prepares to shriek!—You should make trial of her!
She understands your humour! I'll be bound
It is a prude you love!

*Col. Blount.* You wrong her, sir!
She is no prude! No freedom you have named
I ever took with her, or dared to take!

*Lady Bl.* Or dared to take! I told you, Colonel Blount,
You knew not women. Dragons, sir, are fables:
So used my aunt to say, and she went further;
Where'er you think you see one, set it down
'Tis whalebone work and buckram; which, without
The fear of sting or flame, you may engage,
And find more peace than there did threaten fury!
Dear Colonel Blount, you love a prude, and think
You have found a miracle of modesty!

*Col. Blount.* No more, sir!

*Lady Bl.* Colonel Blount, you love a prude!
'Tis ever thus with men particular;
Men that in squeamishness would outdo women!
That knit a brow at this, and shrug at that,
Take shocks at horrors that amount to nothing;
Whom nothing will content except perfection,
Which when at last they find,—they find they are losers
By many a better thing they met before,
And pass'd in chase of it! I give you joy, sir,
To love a prude.

*Col. Blount.* Nay, sir—

*Lady Bl.* Yea, sir; a prude!
I see her!—She 's before me!—Just the eyes,
I know she has! the use she makes of them!—
How fond they are of the ground! I warrant you,
Her thoughts are not of their taste!—Gentle primness!
There is a mouth after your own chaste fancy!
Look at the lips, how they hug one another,
Like innocents that cling at thought of parting!—
If I were near them!—What a sober cheek!



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Durst ever laughter come there?—I 'll be bound
When 'tis alone or keeping company
With one that understands it! Colonel Blount,
I 'll court your mistress, and I 'll carry her
In a week! She is a prude, fair Colonel Blount!
*Col. Blount.* Hold, sir!—On no account that bears not proof
Asperse the character of her I love!
Say that I boast because I think her fair,
She can spare beauty, 'tis her least desert!
But when in wantonness you doubt her heart,
Wherein do I in seriousness confide,
Which to her beauty is, what to the earth
The sun!—the radiant fountain, gives it light;
You tax my patience past what it can bear,
And all the man in me is up in arms!
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. 'Tis plain he loves—and oh!—how well he loves!
What is 't to me! I feel a sickness which
I never felt before! The world I'd give
To see the woman that has conquer'd him;
I would I were away!—My feigned part
I have play'd too long, can scarce keep up and wish,
And heartily, I ne'er had play'd at all!
Up heart and bear me through!—[*Aloud.*] Good day, fair sir,
I thank you for the audience you've vouchsafed!
But wish you had not loved a prude!
*Col. Blount* [*drawing*]. 'Sdeath, sir!
*Lady Bl.* [*alarmed*]. Stop!—[*Recovering*] draw upon me under your own roof!
*Col. Blount.* I am corrected! You must pardon me;
But, to keep patience, I must quit the room.
*Lady Bl.* Farewell, sir—but, believe me, you will find
The lady is a prude!
*Col. Blount.* Away, sir! [*Goes out.*
*Lady Bl.* Prude!
Jilt, shrew, whate'er she is, would I were she!
[*Goes out.*

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# ACT V.

## SCENE I.—*The House of* LADY ANNE.

*Enter* JANE *and* LADY BLANCHE.

*Lady Bl.* At home to me! Why not at home to all?
What ails her? Is she ill? When saw she last
Sir Philip?
*Jane.* Yesterday.
*Lady Bl.* He was not here
To-day? They have quarrell'd. She's in love with
him.
I thought 'twould come to this. Play governess
To a pupil with a beard! Pore cheek-by-cheek
Over a book with him! A score to one
The cheeks would meet. I wonder, then, the odds
The lips would keep asunder.
*Jane.* You have guess'd it.
*Lady Bl.* He kiss'd her? How know you?
*Jane.* I saw it, madam,
Entering the study unawares. Their backs
Were towards me: they were sitting side by side
Before the reading-desk, and as I oped
The door he kiss'd her. She was on her feet
In a moment.
*Lady Bl.* At the kiss or at the door?
*Jane.* I'll not be positive.
*Lady Bl.* But you can guess.
Or if you cannot, I can.—She turn'd round,
And then she quarrell'd with the kiss—Go to!
You have made mischief. 'Twere a sinless kiss
Had not you look'd upon it. Get you gone,
You have wicked eyes! Go send your lady to me.
[JANE *goes out.*
My heart is gone! The symptoms yesterday
I feign'd, I feel to-day. To mock, to catch,
So runs the saying, and 'tis true. I mock'd—
Dissembled love for the young 'prentice boy,

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And what I pass'd before for, now I am.
A maid indeed in love—in love with him
Who having leap'd the pale that bade him dwell
Aloof from gentle blood were now my match;
But he has all forgot the yeoman's maid.

LADY BLANCHE *sits disconsolately. Enter* LADY ANNE, *who draws a chair beside her, and likewise sits.*

*Lady A.* Well, Blanche.

*Lady Bl.* Well, Anne. You have quarrell'd with Sir Philip.

*Lady A.* And you have lost your pains with Colonel Blount.

*Lady Bl.* We have play'd our cards like fools.

*Lady A.* I fear we have.

*Lady Bl.* I know we have. My game is gone.

*Lady A.* And so
I fear is mine.

*Lady Bl.* Why, Anne, you're not in love?

*Lady A.* I doubt I am. Are you in love, dear Blanche?

*Lady Bl.* I know I am. What could possess you, Anne,
To set yourself up at an age like yours
For an old maid? Would you be wiser than
Your mother was? Had she been of your mind,
Where had you been?

*Lady A.* What could possess you, Blanche,
To give me credit for't, and you yourself
A woman? Think you there was ever one
Who led a life of single blessedness,
And with her will? You did forget your mother
As well as I. Children had better take
Example from their parents; they are copies
More like to spoil than mend by altering.

*Lady Bl.* My mother was a wife at twenty-four.
Past that, I'm like to be no wife at all.
This comes of scorning men. How could you think
Women were e'er design'd to live without them?
Look at men's trades—no woman e'er could follow.
A pretty smith you'd make, to blow a bellows
And set an anvil ringing with a hammer.

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*Lady A.* Or you a pretty mason, with a mallet
Shaping a block of freestone with a chisel!
*Lady Bl.* You could not be a doctor, nor a surgeon.
*Lady A* Nor you a lawyer—would you wear the wig?
*Lady Bl.* I'd starve first. You would never make a sailor.
*Lady A.* Nor you a soldier.
*Lady Bl.* I could fight. I'd like
To fight with Colonel Blount.
*Lady A.* What! has he chafed you?
*Lady Bl.* Mortally! Of my beauty made as light
As 'twere a dress would only wear a day!
Averr'd I painted, which, although I did,
Designing not to show, how durst he see?
Denied that I had eyes. Have I not eyes?
Call'd me coquette, anatomised me so,
My heart is all one mortifying sore,
Rankling with pain, which, 'gainst all equity,
I pay him for with love instead of hate.
*Lady A.* Why, Blanche, can it be you?
*Lady Bl.* Can you believe
That love could be constrain'd? That one could love
Against one's will? That one could spite one's self
To love another? Love and hate at once?
I could kill Colonel Blount—could hack him up!
Make mincemeat of him—and could kill myself
For thinking I could do it, he is so full
Of wisdom, goodness, manliness, and grace!
I honour him, admire him, yea, affect him;
Yet more than him affect the 'prentice boy,
Whose blushing cheek attested for his heart
That love was an unknown, unlook'd-for guest,
Ne'er entertain'd before, and greeted, now,
With most confused, overpow'red welcome!
*Lady A.* You loved the 'prentice boy!—you thought not that
Before.
*Lady Bl.* Because it seem'd too slight for thought.
A spark I did not heed, because a spark!
Never suspected 'twould engender flame
That kept in secret kindling, nor was found

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Before the blaze that now keeps raging on,
As from the smother springs the fiercest fire.
*Lady A.* Well! make confession to him.
*Lady Bl.* Make my will
And die! He loves no more. The fire is out!
Vanish'd!—the very embers blown away!
The memory even of my features gone,
At sight of which it bursts with such a glare
As crimson'd all the welkin of his face,
And mock'd, as you would think, extinguishing!
Nor rests it there—another fire is lit
And blazes to another deity!
There is the altar burn'd before for me,
But to another does the incense rise.
There is the temple where I once was shrined,
But to another's image sacred now;
And mine profaned, unbased, cast down, cast out,
Never to know its worshipper again!
*Lady A.* Thou dost not weep.
*Lady Bl.* I do!
*Lady A.* You are in love!
*Lady Bl.* To be sure I am. O! never women more
Deceiv'd themselves than we did! To believe
It rested with ourselves to love or not;
As we at once could have and lack a heart;
As though we were not made of flesh and blood;
As though we were not women—women—skiffs
Sure to be toss'd by passion as by waves
The barque that 's launch'd into the open sea!
Why don't you weep?—you would for sympathy,
Did you but love as I do
*Lady A.* Love as you do!
The loves of twenty women would not make
The heap of mine.
*Lady Bl.* And mine among the number?
Now look you, Anne, the moiety of my love
Would make your heap.
*Lady A.* Would make my heap? Its tithe
Would beat your moiety!
*Lady Bl.* The measure of it?
*Lady A.* The earth!

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*Lady Bl.* I 'll give thee in the sun and moon !
My love holds measure with the universe !
That mocketh bounds.
*Lady A.* Ne'er woman loved as I do.
*Lady Bl.* Ne'er woman loved at all, compared to me !
In me the passion, Anne, is nature ! what
I feel, you only have a notion of.
I love by heart ; you only, Anne, by rote !
Peace, I will have it so !—upon my life
We are a pair of most renown'd old maids !

*Enter* JANE.

*Jane.* So please you, madam, have I now your leave ?
*Lady A.* Leave !—Whither go you ?—Oh, I had forgot.
I gave her leave to spend the afternoon
With Charlotte, your fair maid.
*Lady Bl.* She gives a treat
To-day. She begg'd of me a room or two ;
I bad her take the freedom of the house,
And with her friends keep holiday, for she
My foster-sister is, as well as maid !
*Lady A.* Is 't not a wedding, Jane ?
*Jane.* I am bound, my lady,
To secrecy.
*Lady A.* Pshaw ! secrecy to me?
*Jane.* It is a wedding.
*Lady A.* And whom marries she ?
*Jane.* They tell me Colonel Blount.
*Lady Bl.* They slander him !
It is impossible !
*Lady A.* You have your leave !
Go, Jane. [JANE *goes out.*
*Lady Bl.* [*calling after* JANE]. But go not forth—wait in the ante-room
For me ! Behoves I further question her !
*Lady A.* Would you betray yourself ?
*Lady Bl.* Betray myself !—
I have betray'd myself—I am betray'd
By him, by you,—but most of all myself !—

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There 's no accounting for the tastes of men !—
I 'll see this wedding !
*Lady A.* Wherefore ?
*Lady Bl.* Know I not !—
To stop the banns !
*Lady A.* Play rival to thy maid ?
*Lady Bl.* The maid is betters to the mistress now !
I must be present at these nuptials, Anne !
I think it cannot be as she reports !
And yet, again, I doubt, and fear it is !
If so, I'll see him give away his hand,
And to escape detection from the rest,
Attire me as the maid he knew me first—
The yeoman's daughter whom he saw and loved.
Follow me. Anne, and see how it will end.
*Lady A.* What profit can it bring thee, proves it he ?
*Lady Bl.* I know not what ! I scarce know what I do.
I have an aim, yet know not what it is !
I shall expect you, Anne.—Be sure you come !
Anne, turns it out, as much I fear it will,
You'll have to answer for't.
*Lady A.* For what, dear Blanche ?
*Lady Bl.* That I should love, and die a lost old maid. [LADY BLANCHE *goes out.*
*Lady A.* Full of her own predicament, she casts
No thought on mine. What will become of me,
Returns not fair Sir Philip to the charge,
Dishearten'd by repulse, which I confess
I gave him more in show than earnestness ?
That 's he !—I know his step !—Come in, Sir Philip !

*Enter* SIR PHILIP

*Sir Phil.* I have made bold to call.
*Lady A.* I see you have call'd ;
I do not see you have made bold !
*Sir Phil.* I came
To ask your pardon.
*Lady A.* Oh !—for yesterday.

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Yes; I was angry!—You surprised me so!
It was not *what* you did, but *how* you did it.
And then my maid to see it!—What knew she
How you intended it? Such things—you know
I view them philosophically—go
For what they are meant for. There is a father's kiss,
A brother's kiss, a friend's kiss—and a kiss—
Of another kind.—You guess the kind I mean—
Not like the kiss you gave me yesterday.

*Sir Philip.* I am not sure of that.—Nay, I'll be honest!

*Lady A.* Do so, Sir Philip! Honesty is a grace
That makes amends for worlds of awkward things.

*Sir Phil.* With safety would I might be honest still.

*Lady A.* You cannot tell, you know, unless you try!

*Sir Phil.* Trying, perhaps I fail.

*Lady A.* Perhaps succeed.
But trying not, be sure you won't succeed.

*Sir Phil.* Dear Lady Anne, I feel—I know not what.

*Lady A.* I cannot know unless you tell me what.
How do you feel?

*Sir Phil.* Most strangely.

*Lady A.* And how long?

*Sir Phil.* Why ever since I came to school to you.
I am smitten, Lady Anne.

*Lady A.* What mean you, sir?
Smitten by me? I have not got the plague!
I don't feel ill!—Can I be ailing, sir?
Do you think me ill?—Do you know anything
About the pulse? Feel mine! How am I?

*Sir Phil.* Nay,
Allow me time to tell.

*Lady A.* O! take your time!

*Sir Phil.* A most sweet hand you have, dear Lady Anne.
Here is a palm, and here are fingers too!

*Lady A.* I hope there are.

*Sir Phil.* And joints.

*Lady A.* Who has not palms,
Fingers, and joints, Sir Philip, that has hands?

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*Sir Phil.* But hands that have all these are not the same!
Some will repel, and some attract the touch;
Some will delight, and some offend the eye.
This palm hath softness, which the eider-down
Were richer if it knew! Those tapering fingers
Are in their dazzling whiteness, and their shape,
Rays far more precious than e'er crown'd a star,
That penetrate the heart with light and warmth
In which the sun is poor!—and here are joints
That mock the cheek with dimples—play on smiles—
As hinges could be fashioned of such things!
O there 's a world of riches in a hand!
Treasures that count with feeling, thought, and sense,
And most of all—in this one.
*Lady A.* Pray, Sir Philip,
How is my pulse?
*Sir Phil.* I cannot find your pulse—Can't tell the pulse—
Know nothing of the pulse.—You are quite well;
But I am very ill, dear Lady Anne.
*Lady A.* Indeed! Sir Philip. Let me try my skill!—
The hand keeps steady while we feel the pulse—
No signs of ailment here.
*Sir Phil.* No fever?
*Lady A.* No:
The even-plodding beat of sober health!
And yet thou mayst be ill.—Art rheumatic?
*Sir Phil.* No.
*Lady A.* Art thou subject to the quinsey?
*Sir Phil.* No.
*Lady A.* Feel'st rigors now and then—the certain signs
Of brooding mischief!
*Sir Phil.* No.
*Lady A.* Hadst ever threat'ning
Of a lock'd jaw?
*Sir Phil.* No!
*Lady A.* Hast thou got a head-ache?
*Sir Phil.* No!

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*Lady A.* If thou 'rt ill, it must be somewhere! How
Feel'st thou about the region of the heart?
*Sir Phil.* 'Tis there, dear Lady Anne; 'tis there!
*Lady A.* What 's there?
*Sir Phil.* My illness!
*Lady A.* What, suspect you, is it?
*Sir Phil.* Love!
*Lady A.* A dunce!—I might have known it all along!—
Of course!—you are in love with Lady Blanche!
*Sir Phil.* Nay, Lady Anne, I am in love with you!
*Lady A.* In love with me! Why, what can I have done
To make you so?
*Sir Phil.* Nothing with that intent,
But everything must work to such an end!
Made me—from nothing—which I was,—a man!
Almost a man—your work not yet complete,
But you will crown it, will you marry me.
*Lady A.* Sir Philip, we shall speak another time.
*Sir Phil.* That other time will find another yet!
No time like the present, when the cause is good,
And the heart cheerily runs along with it!
*Lady A.* Give me a day!
*Sir Phil.* What! with such friends as these
To back me now?
*Lady A.* What friends?
*Sir Philip.* Your blushes, lady,
You fain would hide, but cannot!—and your eyes,
O'er which you drop those snowy veils, their lids,
To hide what they would tell—yet thus betray;
And your whole form shrinking with consciousness,
Which breathes such fears as fan the lover's hopes.
Dear Lady Anne—
*Lady A.* Sir Philip, here I am,
And judge me as a man of honour would
The maid he truly loves, and not in vain!
There—you have ta'en possession! Loose me now,
And meet me presently at Lady Blanche's,
Whither by friendship am I summon'd straight!
And should obey, since love's behest is done.
[*They go out severally.*

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## SCENE THE LAST.—*A Room in* LADY BLANCHE'S.

*Enter* JOHN.

*John.* The knot is tied!—I am a married man,
And now I wish myself a single one!
Great people do not sort with me, their ways
Are so uncommon! 'Tis a serious thing
To marry! There throughout the ceremony
Sir Philip stood, with handkerchief to mouth,
Stifling his laughter; opposite, his friends,
Lords John and Stephen, lords although they be,
Tittering outright, and nudging one another.
Be this the mode with men of quality,
I know, in those beneath them, it would pass
For monstrously bad breeding! But the worst
Is yet to come!—The bride herself did laugh—
Laugh till her sides shook.—Yea, and I prepared
With a most lovely kerchief for the tears
I thought she would be drown'd in.—'Pon my life,
Great folks are no great things—but I am married!

*Rob.* [*entering, handkerchief to mouth*]. What! Col. Blount alone!—Why, where's your bride?
Gone to recruit her spirits, I suppose,
After the ceremony! 'Twas a most
Affecting one!

*John.* You found it so.

*Rob.* I did.
How near akin are moods most opposite!
I vow there's not a pin's point difference
'Twixt tears and laughter.—Nay, 'tis known to all
Grief laughs as oft as weeps.

*John.* You mean it falls
Into hysterics.

*Rob.* As I nearly did
To-day.

*John.* No!

*Rob.* Yes, as I'm a baronet!
Upon my life!—O, Colonel Blount, how well
You play'd the bridegroom!—so impressively.
I have seen moving things, but ne'er was moved

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Before to-day! 'Twas well the clergyman
Was hackney'd in the ceremony, else
He never had got through with it!
*John.* Say you so?
This is another version of the story!
And did I play the bridegroom movingly?
*Rob.* The bride, methinks, might satisfy you there.
I am sure I saw her tremble.
*John.* She did shake!
*Rob.* Indeed? 'Twas well she did not quite go off.
*John.* I thought 'twas all with mirth.
*Rob.* Mirth, Colonel Blount!
I wish you could have seen and heard yourself!
You look'd and spoke!
*John.* How did I speak and look?
Pathetically?
*Rob.* Spare me, gentle sir,
I lack your constancy!
*John.* My constancy!
It is my forte!—If there is one thing, sir,
Wherein, among the things that I excel in,
I do surpass myself, I may aver
It is my constancy. I see it now!
I have a way of speaking serious things,
And doing them, quite of my own!—The bride!

*Enter* CHARLOTTE, *supported by* JACOB *and* STEPHEN.

Permit me, noble friends, how does my wife?
*Char.* A little better!
*John.* Cruel that I was!
The ceremony was too much for you!
And 'twas my fault! If I had dream'd of it,
I should have skipp'd my share, or rhymed it o'er.
*Char.* I ne'er heard sermon so affected me,
And I have heard all kinds—charity ones,
And funeral ones—I may have wept at some,
But never was o'erpower'd until to-day!
*John.* Nay, think of it no more.
*Char.* Each syllable spoke volumes to me.
*John.* You distress me, love!
*Char.* I must give vent to what I feel, or drop!
*John.* Nay then, dear love, speak on.

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*Char.* You certainly
Were destined for the church.
*John.* O no!
*Char.* You were!
*John.* Upon my honour, love, I tell thee no!
*Char.* The gown and surplice little know their loss!
But stop! said I the church?—I meant the stage,
For there they have the art superlative
Of moving hearts, beleaguering them so,
Perforce they yield, and to the captors pay
Tribute incontinent of sighs and tears!
*John.* I do suspect the stage had been my forte!
*Char.* What a tragedian, husband, had you made!
*John.* I think I had!
*Char.* Were it a killing part,
No need of dagger, poison'd chalice, cord!
Your looks had slain without them.
*John.* I believe
The stage has lost a murderer in me!
I won't regret it, though; come, lady wife,
We now must feast, so let me lead thee home!
*Peter* [*entering*]. One Master Blount inquires for you below,
A dame along with him who seems his wife.
*John* [*aside*]. My father and my mother!—Bid them hie
At noon to-morrow to the place they know
On Ludgate-hill.—I cannot see them here.
[PETER *goes out.*
*Char.* Who wants to see you, husband?
*John.* Nobody.
A friend of such a sort as one may have
And know not; one may lose and never miss.
*Peter* [*re-entering.*] He is angry at your answer—there he stands
And will not quit the door.
*John.* Most shocking breeding;
Repeat my answer, sir, I cannot see him.

[COLONEL BLOUNT *bursting in, followed by* MASTER *and* MISTRESS BLOUNT: SIR PHILIP BRILLIANT *and* LADY ANNE, *who joins* LADY BLANCHE, *entering from another part of the chamber.*

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*Col. Blount.* Where is my brother?—may I call him so,
Who keeps his reverend parents at the door!
What means this, John—how comes it? What! Art thou
My elder brother, and instruct'st me thus?
Endurest thou the roof that is too proud
To shelter these most loved and sacred heads?
Spurn'st not the threshold that admits thy feet,
And these most hallow'd ones forbids to pass?
Hold'st commerce with the host that takes thee in,
And those thou ow'st thy being to shuts out?
For surely host, roof, threshold, are to blame;
For sacrilege 'gainst nature like to this,
And not the man with whom I share one blood.
*John.* There are times, brother, and occasions.
*Col. Blount.* None
For doing that which damns the precious soul;
And Heaven hath set our parents next itself
For piety, whose slight entaileth death!
Passing along with these most noble friends,
I saw our sire and mother at the door;
Paid them my duty; found they had traced thee hither,
Succeeding on the search that baffled me;
Learn'd the proud message thou hadst sent them down;
And gave 't reception, as became their son!
Up to them, brother! no excuses make
For what admits of none; but own thy fault,
And ask for pardon.
*Mis. Blount.* Husband, tell me now,
Is not a mother far the likeliest
To know her own son? Where is now thy John?
But look upon my Thomas! Gentleman
Or tradesman, he is the same!—would own thee, though
Thou still hadst apron on!—would smile at me,
Call'd I him now "Good Thomas!—Honest lad!—
Kind boy!" as, when he was thy 'prentice, John,
I used to do; and he did like to hear,
And now, I will be bound, would like as well.
*Col. Blount.* O mother, there are strains in boyhood heard,

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As men that thrill us, as none other can!
But come, forgive my brother.
*Lady A.* [*coming forward*]. Blanche, a thought
Has struck me. Show thyself. Let him behold
The yeoman's maid again.—He is riveted!
*Col. Blount.* She is found.
*Lady A.* [*aside*]. My guess was right!
*Col. Blount.* It must be she!
The simple silent maid, in humble guise,
Whose beauty unpretending, without aid,
Made captive of me! Whom, although I left
I follow'd still—from whom that gap, they say,
Oblivion doth fill up—fatal to love—
Absence—could ne'er divide me, but became
A bed in which the stream of memory ran,
And gather'd flood in flowing.—Art not she?
O turn to me!—O let me see thy face,
The radiant impress of consummate woman,
Superlative from Nature's hand alone,
Who, jealous of her master-work, refused
Prosperity and rank a share in thee,
And made thee daughter, rare, of lowliness!
Will you not turn?
*Lady Bl.* Yes, will you guarantee
All risk thereby I run.
*Col. Blount.* I do!
*Lady Bl.* Behold!
*Col. Blount.* The yeoman's maid! were empress of the earth,
Did rank by beauty go!
*Lady Bl.* Know'st thou me not?
*Col. Bl.* Know I thee not? Ay, by these eyes that see thee,
These ears that hear thee, and beyond e'en these,
The heart that feasts on what they see and hear.
*Lady Bl.* Thou know'st me not?
*Col. Bl.* Art not the yeoman's maid?
*Lady Bl.* I am, but was not she.—She was a sprite,
My wayward fancy for illusion raised,
Now marvellously turn'd to flesh and blood,

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Through talisman of thy most noble worth!
None see you here beside the yeoman's maid?
*Col. Blount.* None.
*Lady Bl.* Let me doff the hood I still kept on.
How say you now, sir?
*Col. Blount.* Nothing do I see,
Except the yeoman's maid. I see the hood
Still in your modest coif and simple cloak.
*Lady Bl.* There then.
*Col. Blount.* The Countess.
*Lady Bl.* No.—The yeoman's maid.
Spare what I was, for what I have become;
If what I have become content thee, take me!
Or take me not, none other e'er shall own me!
Now do I see how wealth and rank themselves,
Estranging nature from simplicity,
May root her graces up, and in their stead
Plant blemishes;—but I have wider swerved,
Misled by vanity and pride of sway,
Never suspecting that to hold one heart,
Outwent the boast of winning thousand ones—
A lesson taught by you and learn'd for life!
*Col. Blount.* How will the mood the selfsame features change!
E'en as the air will change the selfsame cheek!
Now, I behold again the maid I loved,
Still love—had loved, for ever, though unfound.
Take thee? I do!—In all humility,
And thankfulness and love, I take thee, lady!
*Charlotte* [*advancing with her party*]. My mistress
[*to* ROBERT.
*Rob.* Yes; and there's my master! Come!
Let's steal away. Come! Stephen! Jacob!
*Steph.* & *Jac.* Well?
*Rob.* To keep our titles, best we take them hence!
Nay, noble friends, tarry awhile, I pray.
*John.* My father, mother, and my brother, there,
And those good friends, I question not, will join
My feast in honour of our nuptials with
The Countess Lady Blanche.



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*Char.* [*running up to* JOHN, *and placing her hand before his mouth*]. Stop, Colonel Blount.
*Col. Blount.* I answer to that name.
*Char.* No, sir! I mean
This gentleman.
*Col. Blount.* Brother! How were you made
A Colonel?
*John.* How was I made a Colonel?—by
Rapid promotion.
*Sir Phil.* Robert, this is you.
*Rob.* I own 'twas I that dubb'd him Colonel, sir,
But with his own good-will.
*John.* Wife, how is this?
*Char.* Dear husband, pardon me,
I am not the Countess, but her lady's-maid.
*John.* I'll be divorced.
*Char.* You must be married first.
You have been cheated, sir, but innocently,
At cost alone of your credulity.
Our wedding and our titles were the same,—
A play to make you wise, and pass the hour.
*Col. Blount.* John, take it in good part.
*John.* I will do so,
Brother, I am a man to bear a jest.
If there is one thing I am master in
Beyond another, brother, it is that.
*Lady Bl.* Anne!
*Lady A.* Blanche [*coming down*]?
*Lady Bl.* A man is something after all!
*Lady A.* Yes, with our help—I made one of Sir Philip.
*Lady Bl.* Nay, Anne, my eyes are open'd. We require
Men's help as well—except for Colonel Blount
I ne'er had been a woman. Much I question
If you yourself are past improving by them.
*Lady A.* O, Blanche!
*Lady Bl.* O, Anne! the older, still the wiser.
And won't I titter when you say "obey"
Before the parson! Will you say it?

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*Lady A.* Yes.
*Lady Bl.* And "love" and "honour" too?
*Lady A.* I will!—won't you?
*Lady Bl.* Devoutly, Anne, as e'er I said my prayers.
But, Anne, the pass we're come to! Don't you know?
How shall we answer to old maids for this?
*Lady A.* Lay heads together, and concoct a speech.
Proceed you.
*Lady Bl.* Nay, I never open'd school,
On which account take you precedence, Anne.
I'll help you to the first word—"Ladies!"—well?
*Lady A.* Ladies—I'll lay the fault upon the men [*to* BLANCHE.
*Lady Bl.* [*aside*]. They lay the fault first who are most to blame.
*Lady A.* But for the men, we had been still old maids.
Accept of our regrets.
*Lady Bl.* Nay, Anne, tell truth—
We don't regret at all! Let me go on,
I'll make a grace of our defection, Anne.—
Ladies, applaud us martyrs in the cause,
For which, contending with more zeal than heed,
We were ta'en captive by the common foe.
Profit by our example, don't despise
An enemy though slight, and if you fail
As we have done, endure it with good grace.
Believe you put on wreaths in wedlock's chains,
And turn with loving faith the links to flowers,
Of which the poorest beggars liberty.



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# THE ROSE OF ARRAGON.

A PLAY. IN FIVE ACTS.

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TO

NEALE THOMSON, ESQ.,

OF CAMPHILL, GLASGOW.

My dear Neale Thomson,

Accept this humble, but sincere Testimony of Affection and Gratitude, from your faithful Friend and Servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

29, *Alfred Place*,
*Bedford Square, London*,
30*th May*, 1842.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

To my staunch friend, W. A. Dow, Esq., King's Bench Walk, Temple, I return my thanks for superintending this Play in the course of the press : but this is not the whole of my debt. By pertinaciously urging a course of the action, materially different from what I originally intended, he has enabled me to enhance the general interest in a degree which has had the effect of rendering it infinitely superior to what it would otherwise have been.

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## CHARACTERS.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT THE HAYMARKET, IN 1842.)

| | |
|---|---|
| *The King of Arragon* . . . . | MR. HOWE. |
| *Alonzo* (his Son, married to Olivia) . . | MR. H. HOLL. |
| *Andreas*, *Carlos*, *Gomez* (Courtiers) . . . | MR. WILSONE. MR. WORRELL. MR. WILLIAMS. |
| *Pedro* (an Executioner) . . . . | MR. GOUGH. |
| *Ruphino* (a Peasant) . . . . . | MR. STUART. |
| *Alasco* (his Son) . . . . . | MR. C. KEAN. |
| *Almagro* (Alasco's friend, in love with Olivia) | MR. PHELPS. |
| *Velasquez* . . . . . | MR. F. VINING. |
| *Cortez* . . . . . | MR. CAULFIELD. |
| *Nunez* . . . . . | MR. T. F. MATTHEWS. |
| *Olivia* (Ruphino's Daughter) . . . . | MRS. C. KEAN. |
| *Theresa* (an Attendant) . . . . | |

*Officers, Jailor, Peasants, Guards, &c.*



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# THE ROSE OF ARRAGON.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Room in the Citadel.*

*Enter* CARLOS *and* ANDREAS.

*And.* The Prince not yet set out!
*Car.* Not yet: he cleaves
To home with doating on his peasant wife.
His journey towards the frontier thrice has he
From day to day deferr'd already; but
The King, impatient of his weak delay,
Brooks it no longer. He departs at noon.
*And.* Guess you, my lord, the motive of the King
In banishing, as 'twere, at such a time,
The Prince from Sarragossa? Hard exchange,
The bridal chamber for the warrior's tent!
The murmurs and the dalliance of love,
For the trump's braying and the clang of steel!
Methinks, the nuptials, he so interrupts,
Can scarce be to his mind!
*Car.* 'Tis certain, sir,
They are not, and no wonder. The fair Prince
Had bent full low, to choose, for mate, a bride
Of pure Hidalgo blood; how then, the child
Of a peasant—grant her pattern of her sex,
And never match'd throughout the lengthy line
Of Eve's angelic daughters?
*And.* Such she is!
A noteless maid, that from all note, howe'er

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Surpassing, doth divert observance, so
Her perfect beauty and consorting form
Bewilder rivalry itself, and turn
The infidel into a worshipper!

*Car.* Certain she has no peer; yet, not a match
For the King's son. So thinks the King, and hence
The Prince hath honourable banishment.
The army needs no prince, the soldier who
Commands it prince of leaders!—do you think
The King stops here? Will he remain content
With banishment of the enamour'd Prince?
Will that remove the cause of banishment—
The knot the Prince has tied, will that undo it?
'Tis but the opening of a drama, sir,
Of which the master-action is to come!

*And.* I trust the King, if more he meditates,
Will act advisedly—Our peasant princess
Amongst her class ranks highest; royal pastures,
For their extent and stock, her father hath,—
Is more beloved than envied; hath a son
Of parts that look with scorn upon his station,
And fiery soul, more prompt to move than rest;
The peasantry speak things that mock content—
Complain of wasting levies, grievous imposts—
And with their thoughts our citizens chime in;
The Cortez have been calmer too.—Behoves
The King be wary how he acts!—A straw
Has struck the sceptre from as firm a grasp,
And may do so with his.—Withdraw, my lord;
Here come the Prince and Princess, taking leave.
Whate'er we wish, upon an hour so tender
'Twere pity to intrude.

*Car.* Have with you, sir. [*They go out.*

*Enter* ALONZO *and* OLIVIA (*weeping on his shoulder*).

*Alon.* Hold up, my sweet!—help me to play my part—
The hardest one!—to go! O stiffly move
The limbs that thwart the bidding of the heart,
And mine would root me here!—Olivia!—
Help me, sweet love!—thy looks dissuade enough

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Without thy tears, where no dissuasion needs,
And all must nought avail!—Each tear you shed
Adds weight to weight, where strength departs from strength
Already overtask'd! My tender love!
O'erlook thine own loss in the thought of mine;
And, that again o'erlooking, glance beyond,
And find enhanced joys, for friends restored;
Who now could bless the chance they once repined at,
Seeing that happiness awhile foregone
Is riches well laid out at usury—
Doubled, when coming back.
*Olivia.* Will it come back?
Will it not fare with us as I have heard
It oft-times does, where men with coffers trade
Already full enough?—who, when they think
Their treasures will run o'er, find all run out—
For o'ergrown affluence, stark beggary!
Oh, no, my love! this parting brings no gain,
Or if it does, no gain that can repair,
Far less repay, this loss!
*Alon.* Farewell!
*Olivia.* O Heaven!
You are not going!—sooner would I think
My arm were from my body falling off,
Far better could endure!—my soul's best life,
Why art thou aught than what I deem'd thee once—
The peasant that I loved!
*Alon.* Lamentest thou
My royal birth?
*Olivia.* Is 't not mine enemy,
Enforcing absence, enemy to love?
Oh, on a peasant's breast I were content
To lean my cheek—that peasant being thou!
Unheeded had the gorgeous world pass'd by,
Or if I raised it thence to take a look,
It had been, only, with more rapt content,
To lay it down again!—O love, forego
Thy regal heritance!—doff name and all
For love, that 's more than all,—I would for thee!
*Alon.* For thee I keep them, as attire, sweet love!
Befitting him to wear, who weareth thee.

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*Olivia.* Leave such attire for those who covet it;
Desert, contented in thyself remain!
In thy fair self thou hast attire enough!
Thou rank'st in heaven—why care to rank on earth?
Where thou shalt see demerit rank as high—
More high, most often—winning thy just seat.
Why have not those, alas! who have one heart
In love, one heart in every other thing?
Then it would be cleaving all! No rending?—No
Dividing!—severing so wide apart,
Hope sickens at the thought to meet again!

*Alon.* Once more, farewell!

*Olivia.* Oh, no! my lord; oh, no!
I feel it is impossible to part!
O that it pleased thee, Heaven, to close my eyes
While yet I hold him here—I were content
The seal were never broke! 'Twere happier
Than open them again, and find him gone!
My lord!—my love!—my husband!

*Alon.* Oh, remissness!
That to o'erlook which lay so near my care!
List—and in this regard, on comfort feast,
As freely as thou wilt! There is a heart
That will be near thee, on whose steadfast love
And faith we both may count. Its owner, one
Whose rank is warranty against suspicion—
Shunn'd for his office—of a nature such
As I forbear, even to thee, to name.
By him shall I be straightly advertised
Of all that passes here; so, should occasion
Demand my very presence, I am near thee
Unknown to any, save that man!—This secret
Lodge in thy heart, with an entire belief,
As trust that cannot fail thee.

*Enter the* KING, CARLOS, *and* ANDREAS.

*King.* More delay!—

[OLIVIA *faints, on seeing the* KING.

Hence, sir!—The rank you should adorn, you shame—
Too worthy for the wearer!—Am I heard?

*Alon.* Too well,—at least for one. It was enough
To part with me,—the hard necessity

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Required not such rebuke, to make it harder !
Her senses all are lapsed,—will you not take her,
My father ? Should she go to other arms
When 'tis thy son's she leaves ?—
[*Places her in the* KING'S *arms.*
For that son's sake,
As thou hold'st dear his weal, health, being, honour,
Protect and cherish her.—O Heaven !—Farewell !
[*Rushes out.*

*King.* Don Carlos, take her—give her to the care
Of those who wait upon her,—watch by her
Till to herself she comes—then break at once
My will, as I just now possess'd you of it.
Her native air will better minister
Restoratives, than our close palace can !
You, Andreas, my council summon, straight.
A peasant share the throne of Arragon !
Better the throne of Arragon o'erturn ! [*They go out.*

---

SCENE II.—*A Cottage. In the distance a mountainous country.*

*Enter* RUPHINO *and* ALASCO.

*Ruph.* How sayest now, Alasco ? Art content ?
Thy overbearing pride is conqueror !
His private nuptials with thy sister hath
The Prince Alonzo own'd, in presence of
His royal father, and convention full
Of all the noble blood in Arragon ;
And thou, the peasant-heir unto a stool,
By proclamation under royal seal—
For 'tis the same as such, as clear implied—
Art kinsman to a race whose seats are thrones !
Art now content ?

*Alas.* I am.

*Ruph.* So am not I !
It was coercing where the will was free
To do all needful right, and such had done !
By the rare beauty of your sister won.
And more by her rare virtue, which repell'd

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The approach of love till honour came with it,
Its most ingenuous voucher that 'twas such
As chariest virgin free might entertain;
The Prince at once besought her heart and hand
Assured by holy rite.
*Alas.* The Prince was wise.
He knew a virtuous woman, and the way
She could alone be won; and took that way.
Thereby receiving to his arms a maid
Whose worth is challenger of Arragon
To find another maid her moiety!
Good sooth, I thank the Prince, for honestly
Affecting my rare sister!—taking care
Of his health! By Our Lady, had he breathed to her,
That 's pure as heaven, one wish or thought of hell,
And with my cognizance—
*Ruph.* Alasco, peace!
Supposing wrongs to be by those committed
Who never gave us ground to think they meant them,
But proofs, instead, of holiest intents,
Is to commit, ourselves, a grievous wrong,
And surfeit virtue of its bootless deeds,
That cannot earn it credit! So oft-times
Uncharitableness defaulters makes
Of those who else were solvent. Think, my son,
If this were told the Prince, how it might change
His aspect towards thy sister, without cloud
And summer brightness now!
*Alas.* If it were told?
'Tis told!
*Ruph.* By whom?
*Alas.* By me!—nor stintingly.
Think you I went a-begging when I went
To claim admission of my sister's rights,
As loud and broad as though she had a king
To father her, being a prince's wife?
*Ruph.* I was content to know she was his wife—
Her honour so assured, it needed not
Be bruited through the realm—disparaging
To his rank!
*Alas.* [*greatly indignant*]. Disparaging!

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*Ruph.* Well boy, how now?

*Alas.* [*recollecting himself*]. You are her father, and you have a right
To speak of your own child.

*Ruph.* I hope I have.

*Alas.* Disparaging!—The Prince beheld her first
At a tournament, among the common gazers,
No state to point her out, and yet the mark
Attracted every eye!—he heard the buzz
Of wonder, heralding her matchless beauty,
And, far and near, the concourse summoning
Before the humble seat allotted her!
With but her peasant brother for a page,
With but a peasant's fillet for a crown,
With robes no other than a peasant's tire,
There sat my sister, on that common bench,
Converting it into a radiant throne
Before which ribbons, stars, and coronets
Did press to stand and render homage to her—
Disparaging!

*Ruph.* I meant to his rank!

*Alas.* His rank?
Rank's but an eminence whereon we see
Sometimes a tower, sometimes a hovel—makes
Alike conspicuous the dignity
Or meanness of the thing that 's built upon it!

*Ruph.* My son, these thoughts—

*Alas.* Nay, father, hear me on!
I honour rank, when he, who owns, becomes it!
For, here, our stations differ from our clothes—
That these are to our measure made; those, not—
Whence marvellous misfitting. Tell me not
Of the Prince's rank, but tell me of his deeds;
Of which I know but little, save that once
He used a peasant's daughter honestly—
That, of its grace diminish'd, when the thing
He felt no shame to do, he fear'd to own!
A private marriage not to be divulged
Till he saw time!—I saw that time was now,
And made him see it, too!

*Ruph.* 'Twas breach of faith!

*Alas.* No, father!—what I was no party to,

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I no observance owed. My sister's marriage
Did accident alone reveal to me.
I found that she had won the Prince's love
Who well deserved a prince—he thought she did,
And married her!—If good enough to wed,
I thought my sister good enough to own—
And told him so. What instances I used,
And what dissuasion he, it matters not;
The Prince has own'd her, and I am content;
Though I had wish'd her otherwise bestow'd!

*Ruph.* What! on Almagro? must I tell thee, son,
The thousandth time, I do not like that man;
Whose God is not the one he prayeth to,
But the worst idol that a man can serve—
Self!—find the friend he does not profit by,
In pride, or vanity, or avarice,
And I will grant him single in his loves!
Find me the friend he would not sacrifice,
When profit kept not pace with cherishing;
And I will show you him who made Almagro,
Help'd him with brain and heart, and, when in need,
Was left there for a doit.

*Alas.* Velasquez?

*Ruph.* Yes!

*Alas.* Velasquez doats!

*Ruph.* He doats who loves Almagro!
Thou, boy! perceiv'st not he is arrogant?
Whom does he not o'erbear that is too weak,
From gentleness or place, to throw him off?
Of all pernicious things, the very worst
Is large ambition with a narrow soul,
Because it strives for power which, when obtain'd,
'Tis certain to abuse.

*Alas.* He is generous!

*Ruph.* And you do hear of it. Boy, there are men
Who coin by charities, and he is one!
Say what he gives, I'll tell you what he gets
By what he gives, which makes his bounties mites;
His modest bounties, that do never seek
To shun the light. He is ungrateful, son!
And he that is ungrateful can't be generous!

*Alas.* He is my friend!—I love him: he loves me!

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*Ruph.* Not thee he loves, boy, but thy properties,
That much avail him in the game he plays
To raise himself to popularity.
For, through thy reverend uncle's loving care,
Thy mind, in youth, was plough'd by diligence,
And with the seeds of knowledge amply sown,
That found a kindly soil! Wherein he lacks,
Thou makest up to him with such a zeal,
Privation doth enrich him!—his small worth—
For he has worth, as every man hath some—
Thy magnifying love doth heave for him
Into a mountain!—make it pass for such—
That, with the crowd, he grows enormously!
But he hath vanity voracious as
The hunger that's disease—which, though 'tis gorged
Full to the throat, cannot stop craving on!
Wait till thou stint'st him there! he'll fail thee—yea,
Though he could save thee from a jail or starving!
Besides, he has the temper of a wolf.
He has been known to use a woman roughly!
Hurt her to vent his choler!—Such a man
To get thy sister's hand!

*Alas.* It were bestow'd
Better than on the Prince,—disparity
Of rank, in those that wed, is dangerous.
In such relation there should be no debts,
Save those that are reciprocal, and which
Jars cannot call to mind! Will the great Prince
Forget the peasant in the Prince's wife?
Will life be all one honeymoon? Believe
The temper is the sweetest—pain will turn it.
And that is of the body, or the mind;
And sometimes is so sharp, it won't abide
A comforter, but flouts the care would lull it!
So, for love's pains, gives love itself repulse;
So, is its dulcet tongue harsh accents taught,
The least of which breaks its entrancing spell,
And wakens moods, to love, as clouds to sun!
Ah then the heart of woman, when she finds
The force her modest nature underwent
To make allow'd surrender of her charms,

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Forgotten! for the host of suing wishes
That won her slow consent, repugnance now,
Rebuke, reproach!—her lack of wealth or state
Cast into her teeth by him, who swore to her
A month ago her value beggar'd kingdoms!
So should it fare with my dear sister, gods!
How she would blanch and freeze to find a churl
In him she loved so dear, she quitted brother
And father for him! I have had my humours,
Which her content has paid for, for a moment;
And when she has reproach'd me, lovingly,
And found it only chafed me, she has wept—
But the first tear has thrown me on her neck.
Would it be so with him?

*Ruph.* 'Twould not be so
With him thou lov'st,—Almagro.

*Alas.* No, by my troth,
Because it could not be—Almagro is
Her equal. But behoves the Prince beware
He sports not with her tears, or drops may fall,
Lie nearer to the heart, from those he cherishes!
Let him beware! If there are towns and cities
In Arragon, so are there villages,
Which men inhabit, by the fresh breath of heaven
Nurtured more hardily than those who live
In streets and lanes, like convicts pent in mines,
Wasted with sweltering. Her first complaint
Would raise a cry for vengeance that would shake
His father from his throne!

*Ruph.* Beware, my son;
The man who ever runs into extremes,
Nine times in ten o'erlooks both right and reason,
That mostly lie between. This is again
Almagro! who would make thee common foe,
While, for himself, the greatest foe thou hast,
He nourishes the friend. Boy!—boy!—that man
Will bring thee into straits! For his own ends
He heaps up discontents 'gainst all above him,
To crush them with the weight—not for the hatred
He bears oppression, but for envy of it!
He blames the grievance he himself inflicts not;

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But, let him have the power, you will see worse
Begot of his own pride and heartlessness!
I say no more, my son!—beware of him!
Where loiter'd you upon your journey home?
Six weeks you have been gone; ere one was past,
Your sister was proclaim'd the Prince's wife.
*Alas.* I took a circuit home to see my friends,
And tell what I had done.
*Ruph.* You 're a great man
In Arragon!
*Alas.* I number many friends!—
No word yet from my sister?
*Ruph.* I expect
Word by Velasquez—who is he comes yonder?
I see but dimly!—I am very old—
Is it Velasquez?
*Alas.* Yes, Velasquez 'tis,
And looks like one who has a tale to tell.—
[VELASQUEZ *enters hastily—stops short on seeing* ALASCO.]
How now, Velasquez?
*Velas.* Are you there, Alasco?
*Alas.* Yes, I am here—the matter?
*Velas.* Nothing!
*Alas.* Something!
Your steps were hasty,—did you speed for nothing?
Your breath is scanty,—was it spent for nothing?
Your looks imply concern,—concern for nothing?
Your road lay to my father,—seeing me,
You stopp'd as bound to any other door!
Was that for nothing?—Ay—and now you stand
Like one that 's baulk'd about to take a leap
Which he felt sure to make—with bated crest,
With vigour chill'd, wann'd cheek, and sparkless eye!—
Do all these things mean nothing?—if they do,
Then means commotion nothing!
*Velas.* I would be
Alone with your father.
*Alas.* So I told you!—well,
You are alone with him. [*Goes out.*
*Ruph.* What is 't, Velasquez?

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Thou comest from the capital, and thence,
Or I mistake, thou bringest news for me.
*Velas.* I do; and therefore wish'd thy son away;
For he is rash; and, gall'd, will take no road,
Save that his fury likes.
*Ruph.* Bring'st thou me news
Would rouse the fury of my son, Velasquez?
Thou mak'st me tremble—I am very old;
Too old to hear bad news!—Don't tell it yet—
And yet I know what it is.—O Heaven! my daughter!
I knew no good could come of this avowal!
The Prince has used her ill!—and if he has,
Let him look to it!—Let him!—Three score years and ten,
'Gainst youth, are but a straw against a staff;
But, with no better, will I beard the man
That wrongs my daughter!—I grow strong, Velasquez;
Am waxing young again, as in my prime!
As I do live, I am!—I thank thee, Nature!
To have left me strength!—I yet am worth a blow!—
[*Staggers.*
I reel, Velasquez,—let me lean upon thee.
*Velas.* The Prince has done no wrong.
*Ruph.* God bless the Prince!
And pardon me that I did wrong to him
In thinking that he had!—the gracious Prince
That ever honourably lov'd my child!
How could I think that he could do her wrong!
Don't say I did so.—What's amiss, Velasquez?
I see 'tis nothing that affects my child:
Nought can go wrong, while the good Prince is near her.
*Velas.* He is no longer near her.
*Ruph.* No!—not near her?
My dark surmises are at work again!
And yet thou say'st he has not wrong'd my child.
*Velas.* Thy child and he are wrong'd.
*Ruph.* We'll right them, then!
Who did it?—well?
*Velas.* The King!
*Ruph.* How?—How?
*Velas.* Despatch'd

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The Prince to head his armies in the north,
And, when his back was turn'd, convoked his council,
And made them pass a formal act, declaring
The marriage of thy daughter null and void.

*Ruph.* His right to his throne is void, if he breaks through
Religion and the laws that fence my child!
There are men in Arragon!—Alasco!—I
Have found my strength again! Alasco!—Ay,
I am a peasant, he is a king! Great odds!
But greater have grown even!—Why, Alasco! I

*Enter* ALASCO.

*Alas.* Here, father.

*Ruph.* [*recollecting himself at sight of his son*]. O—I call'd you,—did I?

*Alas.* Yes.

*Ruph.* I did it without thinking—well, Alasco?

*Alas.* Well, father?

You call'd me, and I know you wanted me.
Speak out, and do not fear my rashness, father:
Though there be cause for heat, I can be cool.
How pale you are! How you are quivering,
And how you gasp for breath! and your eyes look
As, would you let them, they could drown your cheeks!
Oh, my poor father!

*Ruph.* Your poor sister, boy!—

[*Bursts into tears and falls on* ALASCO's *neck.*

*Alas.* What of my sister?—Say, Velasquez, for
My father can't, or won't.

*Enter* ALMAGRO, *and a number of other* Peasants.

*Alma.* Alasco—news!

*Alas.* Ay, now I'll hear it.

*Ruph.* Tell it you, Velasquez!
Let it not come from him! He will heap fire
On fire.

*Velas.* Your sister is divorced, Alasco,
By edict of the men who guard the laws.

*Alma.* Who break the laws!—Yes, the fair Prince Alonzo,—

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Royal Alonzo !—weary of his wife—
Though but the waning of the honeymoon,
Only the waning—he were made of ice
Could think it more—on pretext of command
From the King to lead his armies—'Twas contrived—
A piece of villany at the first sight ;—left her,
To cast her honourably from his bed !
*Ruph.* Thou liest .
*Alma.* [*furiously*]. Liest !
*Alas.* Peace ! Almagro !—Nay,
Scowl not upon my father ! if you are angry,
Brow me !
*Alma.* My dear Alasco !
*Ruph.* Dear !—how long ?
The Prince did never yet a double deed !
I would that I could say as much for thee !
*Alma.* For me ! [*furiously.*]
*Alas.* Again ? May not an old man say
What he likes ?
*Ruph.* I would all young men spoke as true !
*Alas.* Father ! your child is sham'd ! That horrid word
Written on her brow, thou'dst wish her dead ere read there :
Her !—me !—thyself !—all kith and kin thou hast !
And can thy breast find room for other cause
Of hate, reviling, or revenge ? If it can,
Mine can't.
*Alma.* No more can mine. I have no foes
Save those who wrong thy sister !—none will have !
Give me thy hand, Velasquez, and be friends.
*Velas.* I could be friends with him bespoke me foul ;
I could be friends with him that gave me blow ;
But with the friend who fail'd me in the need
He should, and could have help'd, I'll ne'er be friends.
*Alma.* By heaven ! Velasquez—[*furiously.*]
*Alas.* Do you rage again ?
Or did I dream you do ? Friends ! if not friends
Among yourselves, waive jars awhile for me !
Who is a caitiff, be it not the man
Laws civil and religious cannot bind ?

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Or what are prayers, if holy rites are threads,
And those they bind, asunder cut at will?
Or what is Heaven, if of no more esteem
Than what 'tis witness to, to be pronounced
A fraud and nullity? 'Tis sacrilege
If from the altar one abstract a mite,
And the offender dies; yet, by my troth,
It may be want that did the deed, not he,
And hunger breaks, they say, through walls of stone!
But what prompts him who mocks the altar, friends?
Pays to the compact 'tis appliance to
No grain of the respect he entertains
For bargains struck by hands 'cross market tables?
What, if not hell?—What should be done to such,
Ay, say he wore a crown?

*Alma.* He should be stripp'd on 't,—
Caged in a mine—yea, mulcted to the cost
Of his life!

*Ruph.* O no—no—no! He should be made
To render back their rights to those from whom
He wrested them—no more. That 's justice, sir;
The rest is vengeance, which belongs to Heaven,
Not sinful things like men?

*Alas.* We 'll master him,
Then deal with him.

*Ruph.* My son, you will not then
Be masters of yourselves!

*Alas.* No fear of us!
Come—to the villages! and every man
Call out his friends, and bring them where we'll meet
In one o'erwhelming mass!

*Peasants.* Where?

*Alas.* Let 's consult!

[*Retires a little with* ALMAGRO *and the rest.*

*Ruph.* Back—back, Velasquez, as thou lovest me!
Back to the capital! find out my child!—
Apprise her of what 's coming! She may need
To be upon her guard. I'll do as much
For thee. Meanwhile, I 'll get me ready, friend,
And follow thee with all the speed I can.

[VELASQUEZ *goes out.*



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Oh, how I shake!—storms do not for old trees—
Time was I thought them puffs. I then was young.
*Alas. and Alma.* At the Cross!
[*The rest echo them, exclaiming,* "At the Cross!"
*Alma.* Now for redress of common grievances—
Burdens should not be borne—we 'll cast them off!
*Peasants.* We will!
*Alma.* One signal wrong does better than
Tocsins, my friends, to call bold men to arms!
*Peasants.* To arms!
*Ruph.* Hear me, my boy!—Alasco! O, my son!—
*Alas.* I am thy son, and for that very reason
I will not hear thee, while my sister suffers
An injury and a shame.—To arms! to arms!
[*All except* RUPHINO *rush out, crying,* "To arms! to arms!" RUPHINO *totters into the Cottage.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*In the Citadel.*

*Enter the* KING *and* ANDREAS.

*King.* What! not the jewels that he gave her?
*And.* No;
Though o'er and o'er assur'd, in taking them,
She did your highness' will. Her wedding-ring
Was all she kept.
*King.* No murmurs? No complaints?
*And.* None; but, instead, prayers for your highness' health,
And length of prosperous life!
*King.* She would be thought
A martyr: she has heard how such have suffer'd,
Blessing their persecutors; and pretends
To imitate them! 'Tis the way to make
Misfortunes profit us—especially
With the mean—to whom the pang still brings the wail.
It moves their wonder, and they worship that

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They wonder at! I warrant you she won,
With patient aspect, and undrooping mien,
More hearts to pity her, as she went forth,
Than tears and wringing of the hands had done!
*And.* She went not forth by the chief portal, but
A private one, and thereby shunn'd the crowd,
That fill'd the street with ferment.
*King.* By your care,
Or by her own?
*And.* Her own, my gracious liege.
*King.* 'Twas much forbearance; but the girl is shrewd;
She knows unlikely things may come to pass;
The hardest heart may melt; my mind may change
To bind more fast, what now I have unbound;
Whereto she takes good heed no hindrance come,
Through lack of patience, now! She is very wise!
Her beauty, past compare, must all allow.
Can she be blind to what all others see?
And can she see it, without prizing it?
The homeliest maid, I ever met with, thought
More of herself than she would seem to do.
She is very wise!—Aught said she of the Prince?
*And.* No, not a word, but paused before she went,
Gazing upon his portrait strainingly.
I think, but am not sure, at first she wept,
For past her eyes her kerchief once she drew;
'Twas then put up, and, to her other hand,
The hand that held it, join'd in fervent clasp;
And thus she stood, the spirit, as I thought,
Of very prayer itself personified;
For o'er her face the cast which masters give,
To paint the act of beatific trance,
Spread, flooding it with light! whate'er she thought,
The words were in her heart.—She breathed no sound
Till she had made an end; as I inferr'd
From a deep sigh she drew; whereon she turn'd
With aspect heavenly calm, as worshippers,
That rise refresh'd, from the renewing altar.
*King.* You speak this heartily!
*And.* I speak the truth!



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*King.* You say the Cortez, in last night's debate,
Made question of my faculty to break
This most pernicious marriage?
*And.* Many spoke
To that effect,—made it a pretext for
Rehearsal of old grievances.
*King.* What they
Call grievances!—Was there much heat?
*And.* There was:
But that within doors, cool to that without,
Where up and down the streets the people ran,
Women and men, but women frequentest,
Crying to one another, as they pass'd,
"The Rose of Arragon!"—"Fall Arragon
Ere she be trampled on!"—"No Rose, no King!"
*King.* Suspect you danger?
*And.* Yes, when discontents
Draw women out of doors, revolt is strong.
*King.* The garrison is under arms?
*And.* It is.
And, every quarter of an hour, patrols
Are sent into the town, to go the rounds,
And keep in check disorder, by the show
Of preparation and alacrity!
*King.* You have not yet gone forth?
*And.* Not yet, my liege;
I wait for Carlos, to report the state
And prospect of affairs. It is his hour—
And he at hand as soon.
*King.* Well, Carlos?

*Enter* CARLOS.

*Car.* All
Was quiet thro' the night; and, as the night,
I would aver the day were like to pass,
But for unwonted calm. An hour, or more,
Tis past the time the shopkeeper should ope—
And he is up, but bides with shutters closed;
The craft of the artificer stands still,
And yet he is awake since break of day—
The cries are silent on the crowdless streets;

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The very churls whose meals on errands wait
Stand not upon the watch for customers,
And breakfast-time at hand! 'Tis market-day—
And to the gates no troops of peasants come,
With garden-viands, flocks, or herds, or aught
Within the list of rustic merchandize.
None is at work, save the tir'd sentinel
Who paces, out and back, his beat; on watch
'Gainst dangers yet unseen.
*King.* It cannot be!
*Car.* What cannot be, my liege?
*King.* That they design
Revolt?
*And.* There 's eight o'clock.
*King.* Hark, sirs!—The town
Is all at once astir! What is 't?—look out!
*Car.* Their houses, one and all the citizens
Have left, and throng the streets;—their cloaks are on,
Close-folded on their breasts; they move one way,
As on one common object bent!
*King.* Descend:
Wait till your eye on some acquaintance falls,
Then call and question him. Go both of you——
[*Exeunt* CARLOS *and* ANDREAS.
What is 't to be a King? —To govern?—Ay!
With such observance as the pilot meets,
Who thinks to rule the sea! not more perverse
Than moody, ever-changing subjects are!
Rejoicing in his helm, *he* ploughs along!
Leagues fleet like miles beneath his flying keel!
Before its time his port begins to loom!—
When takes him, right a-head, all unawares,
A furious shift of wind; which, if he 'scapes
From foundering, blows him, from his jocund course
A thousand miles away!—So with a King!
A month ago the war was popular;
My people's wishes with my army blew,
Which from the gates of Sarragossa march'd
'Mid shouts that would have made their cannon mute,
Suppose 'twere set to roar.—I was a god!
Knees bent to me as I retraced my steps,

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Returning to my palace! All at once
The humour changed. From end to end the realm
Became one cauldron, ready to boil o'er
With discontents! A little more of heat
Was wanted only—that is now supplied!
The meanest sire in Arragon, suppose
His son, like mine, offended, would be free
To cast his bride and him to beggary!
But I must needs forbear, because—a King!——

*Enter* CARLOS.

Your tidings, Carlos?

*Car.* In our power we hold
The cause, if not the head of the revolt,
That boldly now breaks forth!—Within the gates,
Acting in concert, as 'tis shrewdly guess'd,
With the malcontents,—The Rose of Arragon,
Attended by a peasant, new alighted,
With steed nigh spent, as through unwonted haste—
Has been surprised, made captive of, and now
Attends with those who guard her.

*King.* Did we straight
Decree her death, who could arraign our justice?
On pain of death, did we forbid return;
On her account defection menaces
Our throne! our life! and she, the cause, defies
Our warning and our wrath! To durance with her!

*Olivia* [*without*]. The King! the King! As you are loyal men,
Bring me before him!

*King.* Is 't to me she comes?
Let her approach.

*Olivia.* I must and will pass in!

[*Rushes in and sinks exhausted before the* KING, VELASQUEZ *following.*

Forgive, my liege, the limbs that can't command
The homage they have all the heart to pay;
And helpless throw themselves along the ground,
Instead of kneeling there.

*King.* How happens this?
Girl, I could rail, but thy pale cheek disarms me!

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What! art thou scared to see the conflagration
Which thou thyself hast raised? Or hast return'd
To Sarragossa, whence I banish'd thee,
To fan the discontent that takes thy part;
And, now thou art detected, makest pretence
On my account thou art here?
*Olivia.* I could not play,
My liege, a double part! I know not how!
On your account alone I brave your frown;
Which tho' it held the lightning's power to blast
Should not prevent me, for thy health and life
To crawl to thee! to clasp thy knees! and, with
A heart as full of love as loyalty,
To warn thee of thy danger!
*King.* Loyalty!
And love!—What love?
*Olivia.* O can you not conceive
Love may be cherish'd, for another's sake,
Towards those who pay us back no grain of love—
Nay, pay us hate instead?—'Tis true, my liege!
Indeed, indeed! 'tis true!—My heart's dear lord
You have taken from me!—'Cross the contract which
Gave him to me, drawn pen!—torn off the seal!—
Stripp'd me to the skin, as 'twere, and cast me forth!—
Yet, could my life this moment stead you,—stand
In the place of yours, and yours were forfeited,
Assuring yours to you—so tender is
The love I bear you, for my dear lord's sake,—
I would not look at it, ere I would lay it down!
*King.* What wouldst thou gain by such a sacrifice?
*Olivia.* Content of mine own heart!—and having that,
I would bless Heaven and die.
*King.* This is romance,
Whose forms are of the brain!—but, look for them
In act, you find them not; no more than shadows
Which mock the hand would grasp them.
*Olivia.* Take a proof!
*King.* Ay, canst thou give me one?
*Olivia.* I come not back
Rebelliously to Sarragossa, whence
I went with but obedience in my heart.

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If you except my love for my dear lord—
I had no thought, save of the arms I had left:
And those, my father's, I was going to.
*King.* What made thee then return?
*Olivia.* My fears for thee!
Roused by the danger thou 'rt environ'd with.
*King.* How couldst thou see the thing that was behind thee;
That had not broken forth till thou wast gone?
*Olivia.* I speak, my liege, of fears that were before me,
With word of which, this friend prevented me,
Instructed by my father!—Arragon,
As well as Sarragossa, is in arms;
Taking advantage of the distant war
Which leaves your kingdom weak.—Not your throne only,
Your life is threaten'd; so, did I return
Against thy will, to warn thee for thy safety,
To urge thee to consult it; which to do,
Flight must embrace this moment!—wouldst thou fly,
To fly along with thee—thy hostage only!—
And wouldst thou not, to die along with thee!
*King.* What proof have I of this?
*Olivia.* That I am here!
What! dear my liege, won't you believe me still?
A simple villager had ta'en my word!
Who would be great, when greatness breeds mistrust!
My liege! my liege!—I am no courtier's child;
My father ne'er had need to hide his heart,
So ne'er had thought to teach me to hide mine;
And though I have heard men speak and think diverse,
The act I never yet could comprehend;
But, when their lips were open'd, listen'd still,
To hear their hearts!—What cause should bring me back
Except your health,—your safety?—Oh, my liege!
Is it the roof whence, banishing my lord,
You banish'd me enough? is it the bed
Whence you divorced me, not content with that?
Is it the face, which when I saw it last,
Transfix'd me with a look that wish'd me dead,
And almost struck me so?—What were the words

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Of him who spoke your will to me?—"*On pain*
*Of death never to see this palace more!*"
I see it!—I incur the penalty!
My life is forfeit!—take it!—Save thy own!
The only end that brought me back again!
*King.* I must believe her;—yet can I believe
Deeds worthy richest blood, can live without?—
Incredible!—Yet true!—Well, Carlos,—well?——

*Enter* CARLOS.

Hast met with those, can tell thee what's afoot?
*Car.* No, my good liege, save by surmises.
*King.* Well;
And what surmise your friends?
*Car.* Some outbreak of
The citizens! But we can master them.
*King.* Yes, we can master Sarragossa!—but
There is fear of Arragon.

*Enter* GOMEZ.

*Gomez.* The citizens
And troops contend to hold the city gates,
Which now the peasantry beset in throngs,
As on some festal day, but not with looks
Pertaining to a feast.
*Olivia.* Sirs! if you are men,
Persuade the King to fly—not Sarragossa,
But Arragon, on treason is intent!
And, thereunto, moves hither all its power,
With threats pernicious to the life of the King.
*Velas.* Fly! fly, my liege!
*Gomez.* The subterranean vault
That, from the Castle, leads without the walls,
Wide from the quarter whence this tempest breaks—
That gain'd, you are safe!
*And.* The soldiery give way! [*From window.*
*King.* I will not fly!—Girl, you have told me truth!
Consult your safety,—join your friends,—leave me!
*Olivia.* I will not quit your side,—I have a brother
Will hear his sister's voice; friends, that will hear it.
Whate'er betide, my life I link with yours!
Both shall survive, or both one ruin share!



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*King.* Girl, are you flesh and blood?
*Olivia.* No, but a rock!
Stand back! [*Meeting* ALMAGRO, *and others entering.*
*Alma.* The King himself!—This crowns our work,
Our expedition in his death complete.—
Upon him!
*Olivia.* Hold! he is my prisoner!
And I have guaranteed his life!—Take mine
If you choose, Almagro.—If you don't, spare his,
Or you *shall* take my life.—Well were it said
The Rose of Arragon kept not her word;
When every Spanish woman, who deserves
To bear her father's name, respects her pledge!
These are my friends, Almagro, more than yours!
They are my brother's friends yet more than mine!
They have mothers, sisters, loves or wives, Almagro!
They will respect my bidding for *their* sakes.
*Alma.* For your sake come I hither.
*Olivia.* And I thank you.
And, for the good you mean me, will not shame you:
Nor, countrymen and friends, will I shame you,
And leave it to your enemies to say,
While you stood by, I broke a *Spaniard's* word!
*Alma.* Suffer ye, friends, a woman thus to thwart you?
*Olivia.* Almagro, who is with you?—who is leader?
*Alma.* Your brother.
*Olivia.* Wait his orders, then!
*Alma.* I do them!
*Olivia.* No, on my honour!—by his father's honour!—
His own! He seeks but justice of the King,
No drop of the King's blood! He loves his sister,
But yet he is the subject of the King!
He is a patriot—no regicide!
*Alma.* Friends, do you halt half way? Why come ye hither?
Why are your swords in your hands? You are standing here—
There stands the King, and lives!
*Cortez. Nunez.* He should not live!
*Alma.* Who seconds me? [*going to advance.*]
[OLIVIA *throws herself upon the* KING.
*Olivia.* Come on, then, if you will;

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My word, you hear, is pledged to save the King!
Either respect my pledge, or see me die!
Around the King's life thus do I wind my own;
If not a safeguard, then a sacrifice!

*Alasco* [*without*]. Olivia!

*Olivia.* Here, Alasco!—Speed, my brother!
Here—here!—he comes! Now to touch the King who dares?

ALASCO *rushes in, followed by others.*

*Alas.* My sister!

*Olivia.* Ay, my brother!

*Alas.* How! the King! [*Uncovering.*

*King.* Your sovereign, sir!—Are you his subject, or
A traitor? If a traitor, in his blood
Consummate what you have begun,—whereto
He lends you his own sword!
[*Throws down his sword, scornfully.*
Sirs, sheathe your blades! With loyal hearts like yours
The King commands, as long as the King lives!
In strife like this—not strife but butchery—
You shall not stain your blades!

*Alas.* My liege, except
What 's shed without, no blood shall flow to-day.
Sheathe your swords, comrades, Sarragossa 's won!
To custody the King will condescend
To render up his person. You, Velasquez,
Will in safe wardship see the King bestow'd.
Your heads uncover'd, sirs!—'tis Majesty,
Though it be fallen in fortunes—
[*The* KING *and others retire, guarded by* VELASQUEZ *and Peasants—all uncover as he goes off.*
Come, Olivia,
Sister, you are no offcast now:—Sit there:
[*Takes her to the throne, and places her upon it.*
You are the Prince's wife. Till he comes back
And owns her such, the King allowing it,
And, to our grievances, giving full redress,
Who should be Regent, brothers?—who if not
The Rose of Arragon!

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## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*A Street in Sarragossa.*

*Enter* RUPHINO *and* VELASQUEZ.

*Ruph.* The people meet to-day! Who summon'd them?

*Velas.* That have I yet to learn; no proclamation,
Notice, affix'd on the accustom'd quarters,
Calls them together; yet from mouth to mouth
The rumour runs, they meet.

*Ruph.* No whisper who
Convokes them?

*Velas.* Some say one, and some another.
But still, with one and all, alike conjecture.

*Ruph.* Knows this Alasco?

*Velas.* Him I have not seen.

*Ruph.* Alasco loses ground. He is nobody!
Cortez and Nunez, who were yesterday
Alasco's hinds,—to-day are better men—
Rated as the things for which they pass themselves.
We do know gold—not men! The coin that 's spurious
Won't pass with one in twenty!—out of twenty
Take one, you scarcely the proportion leave,
Who, for the sterling man, will take the base!
Opinion lords it! Let but the cheat keep close,
Take heed the wash conceals the brass or lead,
The stamp and colour carry it!—we do ring gold,
We do not so with men, but trust report,
Or sight; and hence the coiner swamps the mint!
So where base metal stops, the counterfeit
Of human nature passes!

*Velas.* Bitter truths!
There is Almagro! nothing is too high
For his o'er-reaching insolence, which his craft
Passes for the aspiring of desert!
Whereto he gathers those around him, whom
Display and luxury corrupt—who leave

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His board high flush'd, to publish, in his praise,
The flatteries he himself doth hint to them.
This will not yet thy son Alasco see,
Who in his singleness of nature hugs
A foe, the very worst the man can cope with
Who deals with such a partner as Almagro!
Take you Alasco, any day in the year,
He is the same!—no change of bearing waits
On change of circumstance—his station mounts,
Not he!—His peasant's dress he still keeps on,
Though arbiter of the fate of Arragon!
This balks, and all at fault doth set the crowd,
Who still the flimsy shows of things affect
More than the things themselves; while, by a course
Diverse, Almagro gathers hosts of friends!
Behoves that man be watch'd!

*Ruph.* Here comes Almagro,
Cortez and Nunez too!—My heart forebodes
Some mischief is afoot! You will attend
This meeting, will you not?

*Velas.* Be sure I shall.
The hour draws nigh.

*Ruph.* I shall attend it too,
Though somewhat frail to thread the jostling mass.
Observe, my friend—so deep are they in converse,
They note us not! They are plotting, my Velasquez!

[*They go out.*

*Enter* ALMAGRO, CORTEZ, *and* NUNEZ.

*Alma.* The man who takes the lead in troublous times,
Would need a certain toughness of the heart,
To withstand the dint of Pity,—not give way
At her instances, which ever thwart the course
Of just severity.—Now such a man,
Methinks, Alasco is not;—a good man!
A perfect man, in the gentler elements
Wherein our nature's founded; but without
Those sterner ones, which render action safe,
To those therein committed.

*Cortez.* You are right;
He is too good!

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*Alma.* A man may be too good!
'Twas fit the King should die! Strong measures suit
Bold enterprises! steps that startle men!
Deeds that commit the actors thoroughly!
Which defy halting; far more, turning back;
That fear itself takes risk for counsellor,
And in the track of doing bustles on!
For though one end combineth many minds,
Yet, of those many, few—perhaps but one—
Can calculate the means unto that end,
The road to it, which ever is to make;
Which some like straight, and others roundabout;
Which some would travel wet, and others dry;
Which some would take by day, and some by night;
Which some would trudge, and others roll along!
Thus, if all go together, one must lead;
That all go safe, he must know how to lead;
He must be brains, and heart, and limbs for all!
I fear Alasco scarce is such a man.
*Nunez.* 'Tis clear he is not.
*Cortez.* See what he has done!
Spared the King's life, wherein our grievance lay!
*Alma.* Wherein our peril lies,—not only that
Our grievance may return with fourfold weight,
But heavy penalty be undergone
For the free breath that we have dared to draw!
*Cortez.* Talk you of penalty?
*Alma.* Of penalty.
For see our plight:—the power we have unseated
Is old in stratagem—has stuck at nought
To keep the upper hand:—is perfected
In subtlety to undermine the heart,
And make the conscience crumble till its scruples
Are swallow'd quick as water is by sand!
The King's a prisoner!—what then? A cage
Lets out as well as in!—no fool but knows
There are more keys than one to every door,
And, failing keys, picklocks and sledges work!
And what are guards, but watchers must be watch'd!
While those who watch them may be bad as they,
And need their watchers too!—Nought that partakes

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Of flesh and blood is all dependable!
"Last life, live hope."—Ay, while there runs a spark
Among the embers!—There 's no bondage, then,
That 's end of hope, but death, with which life ends!
While the King lives, there 's hope for tyranny,
And, peradventure, there 's despair for us!
*Nunez.* If he escapes, we are lost.
*Alma.* Not all of us.
Alasco is not lost who spared the King!
Were I a man who saw with other eyes
Than those of partial love, thus might I say—
"Well done, Alasco!—how the fair world goes!
Honesty has no chance in it!—makes a noose
For its own neck, e'en of the selfsame springe
That knavery poaches with!"—I'd slay the man
That call'd Alasco knave!—yet thus a man
Who loved him not might say—"A day ago
Alasco was a traitor like myself,
Like you, and every one of us!—his neck
Was debtor to the noose!—but mark,—the death
Of the king, which he along with us conspired,
And which proposing only, we did pawn
Our lives and all to fortune, by a cast
To be redeem'd or lost; he makes assurance
Of safety, enrich'd by such prosperity,
As of his tallest hopes, a month ago,
Makes pigmies now!—saves the King's life!—Good sooth,
Some men see far,—can calculate most shrewdly
The course of consequences!—I had studied
An hour, or more, methinks, ere I had seen
The way to the King's favour was to put
His life in jeopardy."—You know I speak
Not as myself, but as another man!
I love Alasco, and, with care for him,
I contemplate his acts with others' eyes—
Or rather strive to do so—much I fear,
In their regards, his mercy to the King
Seems favour to himself.
*Nunez.* And yet he keeps
The King in durance!

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*Alma.* True.
*Nunez.* How thereupon
Shall he acquit himself to the King?
*Alma.* How?
*Nunez.* Yes.
*Alma.* By laying it to our charge; to which, no doubt,
He to the King sets down his threaten'd life!—
Heard'st what one said to me, when that I urged
Which you urge now—a shrewd, far-sighted man?
*Cortez.* What did he say?
*Alma.* "Alasco spares the King,
Thereby incensing us, too chafed thereat
To brook the further step—setting the King
At liberty!"—Do you see?—"On our account
He keeps the King in durance—for himself,
He would set him free to-morrow!"—Do you see?
"He makes his sister Regent,—What is she?
The wife of the Prince, the King's son!—Very well!
Where is the Prince?—on the frontier with the army.
Where will he be a month hence, when he learns
The state of Sarragossa?—At her gates,
With other knocks than beggars give for alms
Besieging them; which we would treat like beggars!—
But worse than thousand foes without the camp,
Is one that lurks within it!—He gains entrance!—
He sets his father on the throne again,
His wife ascended but to render up;—
Alasco is the brother of his wife;
Alasco the preserver of the King;
Alasco of his treason is assoil'd;
His fault transmuted into his desert;
His sister, royal consort for his sake;
Himself adopted, cherish'd, help'd to climb;
While we, his instruments, which when he used
He cast aside, obtain for our deserts
The dungeon, or the galleys, or the scaffold!"
Now do you see?
*Cortez.* How well you argue it!
*Alma.* I, my dear friend!—I only tell you what
Another said—I did not argue so.

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How could I, loving good Alasco?—Love
With all mankind is blindness, more or less!
*Cortez.* Would we had made you Regent!—
*Alma.* Had you done so,
Thus far at least you had been safe—your ends
Had been my own!
*Nunez.* And why not Regent now?
*Cortez.* The law is now the people's will—the people
To-day assemble—Nunez, you and I
Repair to the place of meeting, and at once
Propose Almagro Regent!
*Alma.* [*affecting surprise*]. Do the people
Assemble to-day?
*Cortez.* They do.
*Alma.* You much surprise me!
And wherefore, friends?
*Nunez.* You do forget to ask.
*Alma.* Do I?—I must, when you assert I do!
*Nunez.* Recall, good sir, what yesternight you said—
"Behoved the people meet more frequently:
That none could tell the day, or hour, their voices
Might save the liberties of Arragon."
*Alma.* Something to that effect I now recall.
*Cortez.* To that effect we lost no time, but set
Your friends at once to work; who so contrived,
The people act as of their own accord,
Nor know the springs that move them.
*Alma.* Admirable!
A master-stroke, indeed, of policy!
*Cortez.* Come, Nunez, come! Almagro shall be
Regent! [*Exeunt* CORTEZ *and* NUNEZ.
*Alma.* Gods, what a giant is the mass in act!
In reason what a child!—I shall be Regent!
They think Alasco traitor! Honesty,
Thou know'st thy thanks! Sweat on!—Alasco is honest;
Means all men fairly, as he means himself;
Is true to the cause; would fetter his own limbs,
To give immunity to the meanest man's
That has embraced it;—yet is he a traitor!
Why so should all men fare who think they live
But for the world, and not the world for them.

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I am Alasco's friend!—yes, on the terms
I have been friend to many another man,
To friend myself!—Apart from that, Alasco
Is such a man as jars my nature most:
A trusting lover of the common race;
Looks to another's good before his own;
Never suspects that men may cheat, betray;
Much less that they might swear themselves his friends,
And cut his throat, as I almost could do,
But for this cause, had I no other reason,
That people say, and not his friends alone,
I have fatten'd on his credit!—for the tax
My pride has paid him there—he shall pay galling!
Yet will I keep awhile the mask on, for
The passion that consumes me, drinks my blood up,
And prompts defiance both of earth and heaven
To compass the possession of his sister!
He is at hand!—now to receive my friend——
Welcome, Alasco!

ALASCO *enters.*

*Alas.* Welcome every hour
That brings me to my friend.
*Alma.* [*with overacted energy*]. I *am* thy friend.
*Alas.* It were believed without that emphasis!
Is anything wrong? Require I now a friend
More than at any other time?
*Alma.* O no!
*Alas.* Almagro, more is written on thy brow
Than thou think'st meet to trust thy tongue withal!
That smile 's too thin! I can see through it, man!
It comes from the head, and not the heart; the which
'Tis meant to hide, not show!
*Alma.* Doubt'st thou my truth?
*Alas.* Ay—thou 'rt in earnest now! In honest earnest!
Thou think'st, indeed, I do!—My own Almagro,
I am too clear myself, to doubt thy truth,
Or any other man's, unless, indeed,
Upon most cogent reason. Listen to me!—
There are not wanting those who love me well,
Whom I love well, that have essay'd to shake

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My faith in thee. When saw'st thou it was shaken?
Have I not still return'd to thee, my friend,
With open face and heart? Thou hast borne me hard,
Too hard, in sooth, to justify endurance
In any but a brother; till I have felt
My tingling fingers coiling in my palm!—
O had I struck thee then!—but, at the thought
Of blow to thee, I could have struck myself;
And never parted we at such a time,
But I have held to thee my open palm
As frank as now I do!

*Alma.* [*with an effort*]. As frank I take it.

*Alas.* What is the matter, man? I do not feel
The pressure of your hand as I was wont:
Ay, there it is! but comes upon the hint.
It used to come without! Man! you are thinking
Of something else than me! or else of me,
In other mood than you were wont to think.
Have I done anything?

*Alma.* No.

*Alas.* No? that 's right.
What is it, then?

*Alma.* What?

*Alas.* What!—come! come! you know
There 's something. What is it?

*Alma.* There is no satisfying
The people!

*Alas.* Now 'tis coming! Well?—go on!

*Alma.* They are jealous of you.

*Alas.* Jealous, are they?—why?

*Alma.* Because you spared the King.

*Alas.* I never thought
To harm the King.

*Alma.* No?

*Alas.* No!

*Alma.* I thought you did!

*Alas.* You thought I did?—what! take his life, and he
In our power?—lose my own first!—While he was free,
While he was able to dispute with us,
His power to oppress, and ours to right ourselves;

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The argument, indeed, was life or death!
That 's over!—at an end!—Take the King's life?
I'd slay the man that talk'd of touching it!
*Alma.* What did you then propose?
*Alas.* What I set out with!
Assurance of my sister's nuptial rights,
And full redress of the people's grievances.
*Alma.* Which you will get! [*ironically*].
*Alas.* Will get? be sure, I will!
*Alma.* Our friends believe they had been perfected
In the King's death.
*Alas.* Our friends believe like fools!
I'll not say, knaves.—Is not the King our hostage?
Where lies his value? Is it in his life,
Or in his body, only?—While his friends
Believe they risk his life, to strike at ours,
Will they be quick to come to blows!—or rather
Will they not seek a parley?—treat with us?—
Listen to our terms?—award them their due weight?
Grant them?—upon the Gospels ratify
A treaty with us, sworn to by the King himself?
Take the King's life!
*Alma.* Would I had thought of this
An hour ago!
*Alas.* Why?
*Alma.* I had been prepared
To justify you to the people.
*Alas.* Pshaw!
I'll justify myself.
*Alma.* I know him not,
He is positive when into action prick'd.
I have err'd in rating him too much a child,
And over-reach'd myself—I must recover,
With the hold I have upon his love for me.
Alasco!
*Alas.* Well!
*Alma.* Methinks was never pair
So link'd in love as we are! We should have been
Brothers!
*Alas.* And we are so!—are we not?
The worth of birth is but the right to love.

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We love as well as brothers, do we not,
Without that right?—what are we then but brothers?
Come you to flesh and blood?—as all mankind
Had but one parentage, in the great first,
All flesh and blood are one!
*Alma.* Yet there's a nearness
In affinity.
*Alas.* Marry yes,—for cuffs as well
As huggings!—Brothers have been haters!—From
One womb spring many natures, as diverse
As the winds, the children of the common air!
*Alma.* Alasco, you did wish me once your brother
By such a tie, as would have yet enrich'd
Our ample stock of love.
*Alas.* I did.
*Alma.* The Prince,
Thwarting my hopes, methinks scarce ran with thine,
Or I deceive myself.
*Alas.* You are not deceived,
And know it—wherefore make a doubt of it?
*Alma.* Our surest wishes sometimes make them doubts,
Through wantonness to reassure themselves!
I should have been the husband of Olivia!
*Alas.* You should!—you had been, had my will
been done,
*Alma.* I know your power was beggar to your will,
Whose vast abundance mock'd its penury!
Now haply turn'd to riches!—Friendship is
A godlike thing!
*Alas.* 'Tis perfect in itself!
So has the start of love, that's not content
Without its guerdon rich; to purchase which,
Crowns have been lost, and what surpasses them,
The grace of which they are but symbolical!
Whence blossoms richer than the garden's prime,
Supposing e'en the Hesperian fable truth,
Have broke their golden promise, and for fruit,
Given all their glorious hues to nourish poison!
But friendship, save its mood, seeks no delight:
Therein it all rejoices!—temperate—
Without the fiery throbbings of the brain,

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And beatings of the heart!—unjealous—pleased
To gather hearts for those it cherishes,
And of its own, making a goodly field,
Where nothing springs, but healthy generous seed,
Fair thoughts, pure feelings, sentiments sublime,
To justify and grace its loved election!

*Alma.* Friends have done miracles for those they loved.

*Alas.* They have!—I wonder, my Almagro, what
I would not do for thee?

*Alma.* There was a thing
You might have done, and did not.

*Alas.* What was it?

*Alma.* You knew I loved!

*Alas.* I did, and help'd your love,
Far as I could.

*Alma.* Not so, Alasco!

*Alas.* No?

*Alma.* You urged my suit, indeed, but not methinks
With all that sturdy earnestness you owed me;
Gavest way too soon to a girl's fantasy,
And an old man's inclining!

*Alas.* Did I?

*Alma.* Yes.

*Alas.* I am sorry you should think so!

*Alma.* I am sorry
I should have cause to think so.—Look, Alasco:
Had I a sister, and my friend did love her,
Her wishes should incline the way I chose,
Howe'er they strain'd diversely!

*Alas.* Ay!—indeed?
I think you are wrong!—a woman in affection
Is steadfastness, or steadfastness is nothing.
And they are fools who seek it.

*Alma.* They are fools
Who in the heart of very weakness, think
To find so stern a thing.

*Alas.* Almagro!

*Alma.* Nay,
I know I speak harsh truths to you; and yet,
Did I speak harsher, I'm your fastest friend!

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Where was your sister's love for you, Alasco,
When she repell'd the suit you urged for me?
Sisters love brothers, don't they?
*Alas.* Yes.
*Alma.* Methinks
Behoves such love be steadfast.
*Alas.* Certainly.
*Alma.* You pleaded for your friend with all your heart.
*Alas.* With all my heart and soul, Almagro.
*Alma.* Nay,
I'm sure you did—I am content you did—
But had been more so with the proof of it.
*Alas.* What proof would you have?
*Alma.* What proof would I have?—Success!
The only solid proof of earnestness!
*Alas.* Almagro!—
*Alma.* Yes, I know—your sister's heart
Was given to the Prince—That's past and gone, Alasco!
The heyday of their love is over, now!
From her deserted bed she now looks back
Upon the day he knelt to woo her thither,
Who leaves her now alone there!
*Alas.* Well, Almagro?
*Alma.* Thy sister is divorced.
*Alas.* They say she is.
*Alma.* What hinders her to be Almagro's wife?
*Alas.* Heav'n!—her own heart!—her father's honour!
—mine!—
Don't touch me there, Almagro.
*Alma.* Touch thee there?
Who touch'd thee there?—If she's divorced, she's free.
*Alas.* If she's divorced against her husband's will,
If she's divorced without her own default,
If she's divorced and yet the contract good—
Perfect, without a flaw, that made her wife;
She is not free, Almagro!—She should die
Before she married thee!—What would you call
My sister?—What was she?—The paramour
Of the Prince?—What! mean you she was that the
which
Did any call her, he would put his tongue

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In jeopardy, for by this honest hand
I would tear it from his throat!—Have a care, Almagro!
Men tell me thou art selfish—thou didst come
Too near a proof just now, in thine own aims,
To overlook the honour thy friend!
Almagro, I'm a child, but yet a man!
Let me not find thee, what men say thou art—
Assured of that I would hate thee—I, Almagro!—
That never look'd upon my fellow flesh
Without a kindness and a care for it!

*Alma.* I know it is thy nature.

[*Changing his tone.*

*Alas.* I have bragg'd;
But if I have, I have said the simple truth,
And, after all, where is the boast?—At best,
We are but what Heav'n made us. By no thought
Or labour of my own, I love my race,
Confide in them, and would do good to them!
It is the bias of my nature, which
Slept in my cradle, in the school-room waked,
And all throughout my manhood has held sway,
To joy in others' thriving!—When deserv'd—
Mark that!—I would not have pretension thrive
When not borne out by merit—'tis as bad
As that a lie should prosper!—Barring that,
I fare the best when I see others banquet;
Nor care to scramble for the upper seats
At fortune's table—I have given them up,
More oft, than I have ta'en them;—nor can I bear,
Except in the sheer lack of worthiness,
To turn my back on men who have their faults,
Because, who has them not?—I am sure not I!—
One kind of man alone I cannot brook—
The man whose God is self!—But one such man,
I bless heaven fervently, I have ever known!
And I as fervently do pray to it,
I ne'er may know another!—Let this pass—
You say the people are displeased with me
Touching the King. Is that all?

*Alma.* Something more—
Affecting your fair sister.

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*Alas.* What can it be?
Think you I err'd to make my sister Regent?
*Alma.* Some soreness thereupon.
*Alas.* I thought it right;
But if our friends think otherwise, 'tis well!
I care not who is Regent, so the course
Of things holds on.
*Alma.* I am glad you are of that mind.
They meditate a change.
*Alas.* A change?—indeed!
*Alma.* And steps are taken to assemble them,
And learn their will and pleasure.
*Alas.* Steps are taken?
Why was not I consulted?
*Alma.* You are too easy,
Too lax in the exacting of your rights!
Men take advantage of you!—to say truth,
I ne'er divin'd you cared to be consulted,
Else had I put a clog upon their speed,
Had check'd its downhill swiftness.
*Alas.* I'm not pleas'd—
And yet the people could not mean me wrong.
Come, come, all 's well!

*Enter* VELASQUEZ, CORTEZ, *and* NUNEZ, *with* People.

*Velas.* Well met, Alasco!
*Cortez.* And—
Well met, Almagro.—We have an errand, sirs,
To both of you. The people are divided—
Half wish Almagro Regent, half Alasco;
All holding the same mind in this regard,
That, in the strait we stand in, it is fit
That one of you should hold the rule, and not
Alasco's sister. Which of you will give
His vote to place the other in her seat?
*Velas.* What do you say, Almagro?
*Alma.* Good Velasquez,
I am taken by surprise.
*Alas.* And so am I;
But I can speak at once—Almagro Regent!
*All.* Almagro Regent!



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RUPHINO *rushes in.*

*Ruph.* No, no, no !—Alasco,
What have you done? I follow'd hither, fast
As my old limbs could bear me—but too late !
O son !—son—son ! thy father's voice ascends
Against thy mad devotion to that man !
Whom now thy breath hath seated in command,
But to unseat, ere long, will call for blood !
O that in even balance should be held
The claims of virtue and depravity;
Of truth and falsehood ; generosity ;
And overweening heartless selfishness ;
That the weak, good, in its simplicity,
Should cast its weight into the other scale,
And heave its own to the beam !—Friends—countrymen—
Undo what you have done !
*Alas.* It is too late.
*Ruph.* Still faithful 'gainst thyself !
*Alma.* Ruphino !—Sir !—
As to your years, with which your worth has grown,
Behoves me pay all reverence—observe
The first use which I make of that same power
Which you begrudge me hold. If I, at home,
Do sit supreme, Alasco, rule abroad ;
And, next to thee, Velasquez ; whom, the more
He is bent to be my foe, the more will I
E'en as a friend entreat.
*Nunez.* 'Tis nobly said !
*Alma.* Away, Alasco ! join the patriot host,
And take Velasquez with thee ;—thou, the chief ;
He, second in command.—My friend, embrace.
How say you, sir ? Am I a man for thee
Or him to fear ?—Health and success, my friend !
You, to bright gains ; honours, and spoils of war !
I, to the care and drudgery of the state !
[*Goes out, followed by the people shouting.*
*Ruph.* This day, my son, we both shall recollect.
*Velas.* Alasco, come.
*Ruph.* Till evening wait, Velasquez.

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Methinks you have forgot your sister, boy:
If not to take farewell, a word or two
Behoves you change with her before you go.
His sister would have speech with him, Velasquez!
*Alas.* Husband your speed, Velasquez, till I join you.
*Velas.* Nay, we shall start together; say an hour
Ere sunset. At the postern with your steed
An hour ere sunset shall you find me waiting.
Not till you join me shall I sally forth,
But wait for you at the postern with your steed.
[VELASQUEZ *goes out.*
*Ruph.* What ponder you, Alasco?
*Alas.* Nothing.
*Ruph.* Son!
You are not ill?
*Alas.* No, no! Lead to my sister. [*They go out.*

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## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*The Corridor of the Dungeons.*

*Enter* ALONZO, *disguised as a Moor, accompanied by* PEDRO.
*Alon.* And so you knew me not, till, with the old
Familiar word and tone, I greeted you?
*Pedro.* No, my good lord; and now I look and wonder,
Knowing who you are, yet not a sign descrying
Of what so well I know.
*Alon.* Past hope!—Good Pedro,
With an entire unmeasur'd confidence
I trusted you; and you have paid me back
With equal faith!—I thank you!—What you tell me,
Touching my father, all disquiet lulls,
Which it behoves a son to feel; and, now,
I am at liberty to be all the husband!
My plans are laid, old friend; and, certain as
To-morrow's dawn is coming, ere it comes,
There will be shaking hands in Sarragossa



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With those who brood to-day o'er nought but blows,
Meanwhile bethink thee of a trusty few
To back us, should extremity require.

*Pedro.* I shall, my lord. They can be found and quickly!

*Alon.* For my dear wife, I will not trust myself
In neighbourhood with her, lest my strong love
Betray me; but shall take the post thou speak'st of,
Near this Almagro; so thou pass me for
The man he said he needed. If from the instruments
Which men make use of, we can guess their callings,
Methinks I guess the work he has in hand,
To wish for such a man!—Come, bring me to him.

*Pedro.* No; tarry here, and he shall come to you.
He so appointed.

*Alon.* Be it so, old friend— [PEDRO *goes out.*
No place so strange as home, when ours no more!
These vaults, familiar since I was a child,
No longer look the same.—Good honest Pedro!
The misplac'd executioner! 'Tis strange!
Use hardens men as to their crafts; while, else,
Their natures all their primal softness keep
Obedient to impression. The hard jailer
Without a shrug, sees misery pass his gate;
The common current of his vocation there
Still rolling on the same—but take him thence,
He has his share of pity for a pang;
Yea, pays it down in good and sterling tears!
I have seen it! Pedro, now, is such a one—
The rack, the gibbet, and the block to him
Are things of custom, whose abhorred uses
Find him their fit intendant, of whose frame
No fibre they disturb. My boyhood's dread
Was Pedro; till, one day, he lifted me
Cast flat along the pavement—in my speed
To shun him.—I was bleeding;—as he staunch'd
My little wounds, how well I recollect
The change from terror to pleas'd wonderment,
To see a heart, as tender as my mother's,
Melting above me from his big dark eye!
"You would not hurt me, Pedro?" said I, still

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A touch of doubt remaining.—"Hurt thee, boy!"
He said no more, but where his tongue stopp'd short
His eye went on, and told a tale to me
That had a weeping close.—Though only then
I guess'd its tenor—but I learn'd it after.
An only son, of just my age, he had,
And lost him!—From that hour I lov'd the man,
And could confide my life, and my life's all,
To him, as now I do. He has succeeded!
He comes—the Regent with him.—Heaven, I thank you!
The post is mine which it behoves me hold
Near to the person of the man who covets
The treasure I have won; and does not parley,
As I am well advised, with scruples,—there, too,
Where jealousy would search the last to find me!
O Power that lovest faith and innocence,
For their sweet sakes, be now propitious to me!

*Enter* ALMAGRO *and* PEDRO.

*Alma.* Is this the man?—his air is very stately!
*Pedro.* It is the carriage of his blood, my lord;
Ne'er back'd by its partaker. You require
A man whom it beseems you have beside you,
Appendage of your court, that will not shame you.
Behold such. A stern man, as prompt as passive,
Whate'er your bidding—such a one attends you—
A stranger, too, to all who are about you!
No race like his to suit you, and of that race
No sample fit as he is.
*Alma.* It is well!
That reverend man you spoke of—have you seen him?
*Pedro.* I have.
*Alma.* What says he?
*Pedro.* He will be your hand.
Not more will question—less will do—your bidding.
*Alma.* Warn him to come to me ere nine this evening,
Ere the third quarter turns.—Friend, do you heed
A woman's tears? [*to* ALONZO.
*Alon.* They do not pierce the ear.
Her shrieks do, and as little they would move me.

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*Alma.* What would you stop at, to obey the will
Of him you served?
*Alon.* at nothing till 'twas done!
*Alma.* Not blood?
*Alon.* No more, sir, than the blade which sheds it.
*Alma.* Wait by my side.—Advancement ne'er is bought,
But at some cost of friends. I know not, now,
Who loves me. Pry about you.—As we go
I'll tell you where my heart and soul do hang
Their all of being on!
*Alon.* An enemy,
Whom you would overcome? He is at your feet!
*Alma.* An enemy whom giv'st thou to mine arms,
I'll fall at yours, as my good angel ever!
*Alon.* A woman!—Can't you strain her to your mood
Without my help?—You Christians there are wrong.
What we as minions treat, to rate as idols!
You flatter—sue—implore!—Possession speaks
Our wishes!
*Alma.* Well you please me, thus to talk.
Thanks, Pedro!—Come!—keep near me. Well you please me. [*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Citadel.*

*Enter* ALASCO *and* OLIVIA.

*Alas.* Olivia!
*Olivia.* Well, my brother?
*Alas.* It is long
Since you and I have talk'd.
*Olivia.* There was a time
We had not been so long apart, Alasco,
At liberty to meet!
*Alas.* There was a time
We had one heart!—That time is past!
*Olivia.* How long?
*Alas.* E'er since the hour you spurn'd your brother's friend,

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His soul's election, from among the prime
Acknowledged of his race, and gave your heart
To throne a stranger.

*Olivia.* He deserved it, brother!

*Alas.* No, not thy heart!—The throne that he was born to,
I grant him worthy of, but not thy heart!
There is but one such throne; as for the other,
There are a hundred such—ay, maybe, better!
How much, Olivia, did it weigh with you
That he, you chose, was heir unto a throne?

*Olivia.* Brother!—[*much hurt.*]

*Alas.* I know! forgive me! Not a doit!
Oh! my Olivia! lives the man durst slight thee,
And do I so? That inadvertent wrong
Hath, more than argument, set all to rights!
Being here to blame, I have been all to blame!
Forgive me! Love me! Take me to your heart
Again, as I do thee to mine, my sister!

*Olivia.* How like a new gift is old love restor'd!
How seems it richer, though the very same!
How the soul opens to receive it, wider
Than e'er it did before!—Alasco! now
I'll show thee, brother, I have all along
Deserved thy love, deserving it e'en there
Where thou account'st me wanting!

*Alas.* Not a word
Of that again! you prized the Prince's worth,
Before you knew his title; which he doff'd,
Lest, seeking love, he might ambition meet,
And take it for its betters! You were wed
Before you knew you were a prince's wife!
Have you forgiven me?

*Olivia.* Have I not, my brother?
But, for mine own content, Alasco, hear me,
While for thy sister's coldness to thy friend
I give thee now her reason.

*Alas.* Give it me,
But for thine own content; not mine, Olivia:—
Go on! Why do you hesitate? The thing
You wish'd to tell me, and I would not hear,

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And then wish'd more to tell me, now I would hear it.
Why do you hesitate to tell ?
*Olivia.* Alasco,
You are so rash when you are angry.
*Alas.* [*roused*]. Ay—
Is there chance of that ?
*Olivia.* No, no !
*Alas.* [*most impatiently*]. There is !
*Olivia.* You see !
Wisely I kept it from thee at the time ;
Else bloodshed had ensued !
*Alas.* [*with extreme impatience*]. Bloodshed ! for what ?
*Olivia.* Outrage long past !
*Alas.* [*furiously*]. Outrage !—[*recollects himself.*] Long past is it ?
Then tell it me, no fear I shall be rash !
No, nor yet angry ! I shall look upon it
As a thing that 's dead, and no more wage war with it
Than I would with a corse ! Almagro offer'd thee
No outrage ? [*furiously.*]
*Olivia.* There again !
*Alas.* [*recovering himself.*] And if he did—
'Tis past and gone, so dead.—Go on, Olivia,
Go on, my sister !
*Olivia.* You remember, don't you,
From long-protracted absence, coming home,
And finding me, whom you had left a girl,
Stolen into womanhood ? Stolen, I may say,
For at that stage I had, indeed, arriv'd
Without my father's note, or e'en my own ;
So change, by progress still before our eyes,
Is oft-times past, before we dream 'tis near.
*Alas.* That time, Olivia, I remember well !
Then first I felt I was a brother, when
The girl, I left, I found not ; but, instead,
A woman newly ripen'd ! You had on
The gear of other times ! 'Twas quite outgrown,
And scantiest there where nature's bounty most
Upbraided lack of fulness ! Oh, what thoughts
Of risks and wrongs, by woman run and borne,

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Shot through my brain, succeeding one another
As lightning flashes, when the welkin round
Is thick with thunder-storms!—awakening in me
Tinglings of feelings never touch'd before,
And summoning, almost in palpable,
Distinct embodiment, the household virtues
To pass in solemn, stern array before me—
Among them honour chief, and chastity!
I sprang to thee, and o'er thy shoulders threw
Thy kerchief, snatch'd from thy surprised hand!
The change pass'd o'er thee then, from frankest joy
To see me back, to strangest wonderment!
The change, from that, to most alarm'd confusion,
As, in a moment, burst on thee the thought
What time had done, thou ne'er hadst ta'en account of,
Till then reveal'd by that thy brother's act!
The statue that thou stood'st, except the blush
Which, prompted by that act, thy heart call'd up
As 'twere to veil thy cheek, and answer for
Thy earth-fix'd eye, that life had cast it there!
I shall be old when I forget the hour
I threw that kerchief o'er thee!

*Olivia* [*hesitating*]. Brother!—

*Alas.* Well?

*Olivia* [*hesitating*]. One day—

*Alas.* Go on! what happen'd thee that day?

*Olivia* [*still hesitating*]. That kerchief—

*Alas.* Well?

*Olivia.* I cannot tell it thee!
I durst not even breathe it to my father!—[*Overpowered with confusion, and throwing herself on* ALASCO'S *neck.*]

*Alas.* You need not! Some one pluck'd it off!—
Who was it?
Who was it?—fool!—who was it but Almagro!
The flood of light a little chink lets in!
How blind a man may be, yet think he sees!
How fast asleep, yet fancy he 's awake!
How may he be cajoled—robb'd—cozen'd—gull'd—
Where for fair dealing he would stake his life,



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As free as risk a counter on a card
With all the odds to back him !—It is clear !
Almagro's heart is rotten !—What have I done ?
*Olivia.* What have you done, my brother !
*Alas.* What have I done ?
You know, and ask !—why, made Almagro Regent !
Almagro Regent, in my sister's place !
Given him command over myself, and worse,
O'er thee, to whom he did that violence
Turns all my blood to fire ! how may'st thou fare.
*Olivia.* Remember you your comment, once you read
The story of Lucrece to me ? You said
She used too late her dagger—that she chose
Most ill, the stain itself contracting, rather
Than bear the slanderous imputation,
Howe'er so base begotten ; that her error
The custom of her time could not atone for ;
That she was more to pride a martyr, than
To chastity ! unworthy setting up
A sample of a woman fit to copy !
*Alas.* Those very words thy brother's heart spoke to thee !
*Olivia.* Those very words thy sister's heart set down
Never to be obliterated !—See !
[*Drawing forth a dagger.*
*Alas.* Thou shalt not come to such extremity !
Oh, let me think a while, my sister—go—
This is no home for thee !—Go !—Hold thee, sister,
In readiness to bear me company ;
But let me with myself a while commune,
There 's something here wants calming—such a sea
Cannot at once go down, and give us leave
To put the vessel on her course again !
*Olivia.* Bless thee, Alasco ! [*Going.*
*Alas.* Sister, stay !—The King !—
His life 's in jeopardy !
*Olivia.* The King is safe !
I fear'd thee, brother,—durst not breathe it to thee !—
But he escaped last night by my contrivance !
*Alas.* O woman ! clear in apprehension—prompt
In action, when her sympathies arouse her !

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A mountain hast thou heaved from off my soul,
And for reproaches, take my blessings with thee!
Now leave me for a while!

*Olivia.* My heart sinks in me
At thought of losing sight of thee, my brother!
[*Goes out.*

*Alas.* How many things come back upon me, now,
That pass'd me by before unheeded by me,
To prove Almagro wanting!—There is Gomez!—
Gomez, he told me was a wretch!—had fail'd him
When trusted by him!—Now he hugs him!—Ay,
Gomez is now of service! There's Velasquez,
A man far likelier to overlook,
Than note a fault.—Almagro must have play'd
The viper to him, and Velasquez shuns him
Lest he be stung again!—There's Henriquez,
Blotches from head to foot, believe Almagro,
And he was hand in glove with him before,
For all his leprosy, when Henriquez
Was factor to his fortunes.—Heaven and earth!
Now I bethink me, where are Pedro, Carlos,
And twenty others, once his good companions?
True men and kindly!—Where are they? gone from him!
He comes!—untimely!—would I could avoid him.

*Enter* ALMAGRO *and* THERESA.

*Alma.* You know your duty—see that you perform it.
Let the reward that I have promised you
Remind you of obedience. Suffer her not
Out of your sight—nor be thrust off—nor humour'd;
Your answer—forced to it—"The Regent wills it."
Not in a hurry though!

*Ther.* I shall observe. [*Goes out.*

*Alma.* Now am I jocund as the mariner
Whose progress e'en before his reckoning runs,
And, ere expected, shows his port to him—
Whose vessel seems beloved of the winds,
Which follow her where'er she turns her prow.
I am Regent!—That is power achiev'd—Alasco,
Speeds to the army, and Velasquez, with him.
That is immunity to use my power!

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Olivia stays in Sarragossa—that
Is love achieved.—Oh! Opportunity!
Thou favourer of wishes, com'st thou to me,
And shall I let thee go again, and say
Thou left'st me mine unblest?—No!—though I craved
The help of fraud or force to effect fruition.
Fair measures first I'll try—they bring our ends
Most happily about. So be't. Let's see—
A quarrel is to be made up—a fault
Acknowledged and aton'd for—so, from foes,
We turn to friends.—That's easy—but to turn
From friends to lovers—there's the feat that taxes
Both wit and labour! There's Ruphino, though—
He hates me! Well!—the good of the republic
May crave his absence hence—some honourable
Employment—like Velasquez, and his sons,
We'll find him such.—So now, to see Olivia;
Admit my error, own it past forgiveness—
The very surest way to make it venial—
Dilate on my contrition—sigh for friendship,
Without a hope of it—a warranty
Especial and infallible that she
Will find me hope enough—and here succeeding,
To fair or foul means trust the rest!—

[*Going towards Olivia's apartment, meets* ALASCO.

Alasco!—
Here yet?—I swear thou art still a child, as much
As in thy play-time years!

*Alas.* Almagro!—

*Alma.* Peace!
Thou mak'st me mad!—what are the thews of manhood
Without the thoughts and deeds?—In patience' name,
If thou would'st bide with men, and rank with them,
Be one of them and act like them!—Balance here,
Lounging upon the heel that should be smoking
With rowels red with speed, at least ten leagues
By this from Sarragossa!

*Alas.* But, Almagro—

*Alma.* Nay, talk to children, not to me!—By our Lady,
Thou art not a man!—A feebleness, Alasco,

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There is about you, hateful to my nature!
An easiness that treats, as lightest things,
Matters of grave account.—Gods!—we have plac'd
Our hopes and fears, our liberties and lives,
In a man's hands, as we believ'd; and lo!
He turns out to be a boy!
*Alas.* By your favour—
*Alma.* 'Sdeath!
'Tis injury to me!—foul injury!—
Return'd for all the good I have done for you!
How will men talk?—what will my credit come to,
For judgment or for justice? Fifty others
Had leap'd at such a post, not one of whom
Had so approved himself unworthy of it,
As thou hast done! How shall I make defence
When they allege to me, they know your charger
Did cool his mettle at the gate, the while
You play'd the page, in your sister's antichamber!
*Alas.* Where thou play'dst visitor!—What brought thee hither?
Almagro!—mark!—a brother speaks to you,
And tells you that the floor you stand upon
Henceforth to you is interdicted ground!
Mark!—interdicted by a brother's honour!
Who holds the trespasser 'gainst his commands
Responsible with his blood!
*Alma.* To me, Alasco!—
Do you say this to me?—to me—your friend?
*Alas.* Is it so, Almagro?—Art thou Alasco's friend?
*Alma.* Can I be otherwise?
*Alas.* Almagro, tell me,
Are you a man of whom his friend can say
He knows his heart, whene'er he hears his tongue;
Or one whose tongue alleges of his heart
Things that abide not there?
*Alma.* What do you mean?
*Alas.* What I say!—Almagro, are you my friend indeed?
Where 's the reply ere well the question 's done,
That, from lov'd lips, can't brook the loving wrong,
But, from one word divining all the rest,

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The mouth of the propounder stops with flouts,
Which, while they chafe, assure him. Art thou my friend?
You are sullen!—Ill at ease, I will not say—
Why did you start when I said—"Ill at ease?"
You are not my friend!—when you declared you were so,
You spoke what was not true!
*Alma.* Sir!
*Alas.* Saint Iago!
'Tis come to "Sir!" The truth is out at last, then!
'Tis come to "Sir!" 'twixt you and me! There 's chance then
That it may come to blows!—Is there, Almagro?
"Sir"—'tis as clear as day!—It could not be!
The thing 's impossible.
*Alma.* What is impossible?
*Alas.* That a strong stream should stop with frost, nor give
The eye of the observer time to wink,
Ere what was flood is ice.—I have been basking
In summer, dreaming on a bank of snow,
And freezing now awake! "Sir"—
*Alma.* You forget
I am Regent!
*Alas.* You are Regent?—Oh, you are Regent!
True!—true!—you are another kind of man!—
Of all anomalies, the most outrageous
Is this—that circumstances should make the man
More than the man himself—just as if men
Were no whit better than the meats they feed on,
Whose value varies by the mode of dressing;
That what, to-day, will bring one pistole only,
By change of cookery brings five to-morrow!
You are Regent? 'tis too bad!—the brute, in this,
Fares far more rationally than his master,
For he is rated by his own properties,
And gives rank to kennel—takes none from it!
Who made you Regent?
*Alma.* Who?—the people!
*Alas.* I!

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*Alma.* 'Tis false!

*Alas.* Ha! say you so?—Come on then! you're
A traitor!

*Alma.* What?

*Alas.* You heard!—is it possible?
Then was it true what some one told me once,
That when he threaten'd thee with chastisement,
Whereof he gave thee earnest with his tongue,
In terms the bearer better were struck dead,
Than unrevenged survive them, thou didst stand
E'en thus.

*Alma.* How?

*Alas.* Why the 'haviour of a sheet!
Anger, I know, turns pale as well as red;
But if it lacks the hue, it has the blow!—
My sister, recreant!—I will not draw
On one that dares not draw on me again,
Nor even wag my tongue at such a man!
"Man!" do I say?—Well, "man."—I scorn to rail!

[RUPHINO *enters in the back ground, and stopping short, half retires again.*

*Alma.* Alasco! you have spurn'd me!—shamefully
Aspers'd my manhood!—and I bear it all,
For I am not a friend plays fast and loose!
Nay, wrong me more!—I will the more forbear,
Thou doubt'st it?—but a proof can face a doubt!
And I have one at hand, will make thee writhe,
That ever thou misus'dst me. Wait a little,
I'll give thee time to cool,—provide my proof;
And then return, and we are friends again! [*Goes out.*

*Ruph.* Alasco! [*Hastily advancing.*

*Alas.* Father!

*Ruph.* Hast thou been, Alasco,
A son to me?

*Alas.* In love,—but not in duty!

*Ruph.* In duty too, dost thou my bidding now!
Wilt do it?

*Alas.* Yes!

*Ruph.* Wilt swear to do it?

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*Alas.* Yes;
I swear!
*Ruph.* He hears thee who remembers, boy!
Forthwith depart for thy command.—Velasquez
Waits with thy courser at the postern.—Fly!
Thou 'lt find within his breast another heart
True to thee as thine own!—Confide in him!—
*Alas.* Almagro!—
*Ruph.* Peace!—Almagro means thee evil!
Thy sister's honour is in jeopardy—
I know what thou would'st say.—It is too late!
She could not fly with thee, were she prepared,
Or were there means at hand, or were there time
To furnish them. She is betray'd!—beset!—
The safety which she cannot fly to,—thou
Must bring to her, my son, and speedily—
It must come speedily, if it come at all!
*Alas.* Why, father!—
*Ruph.* Heav'n!—in my extremity
Cannot I find a friend in my own son!
Thy sister, by Almagro's treason warn'd,
Has set the King at liberty, and word
Was by his secret escort brought that he
Had to the patriot force commission sent
With terms of such redress, as their demands,
O'erbearing as they were, durst ne'er lift eye to!
I should not wonder, met you now advancing,
And hand in hand, those who the other day
Bore weapons against weapons! There is rescue!
Safety! for me, thy sister!—all of us!
Away—away,—not by the common stair—
Almagro now ascends it, with his guards!
They come for thee—believe me for this once!
This passage to thy sister, by her lord
Reveal'd, by her to me,—and which were now
Portal to liberty, were she not watch'd
By spies, who dog her every footfall—safe
Without the postern will conduct thee.—Fly—
No word!—Thy oath!—Thy sister's honour!—Fly!

[ALASCO *goes out.*

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*Enter* ALMAGRO *with Guards, and attended by* NUNEZ *and* OMER.

*Alma.* [*speaking as he enters*]. Secure the traitor!—
only now his sword
Was pointed 'gainst your Regent's heart.
*Nunez.* My lord,
Alasco is not here!—this is his father.
*Alma.* Not here!—I left him here!—where is the traitor?
*Ruph.* Inquire, Almagro, of thyself for him!
*Alma.* Where is thy son?
*Ruph.* Safe, monster, from thy fangs!
*Alma.* What! fled!—Go seek him in the room beyond.
Some nook will give him to you,—he could not fly!
Myself stood sentry on the stair.

[*All go out but* ALMAGRO *and* RUPHINO.

*Ruph.* You did?
You needs must love the friend you watch so well!
*Alma.* You mock at things make other men look grave.
*Ruph.* What things?
*Alma.* Bonds!—maybe death!
*Ruph.* O Heav'n! this man
To talk of bonds and death to me that was
More than his equal yesterday!—'Tis thus
Fair enterprise falls into disrepute,
And the just fight is lost!—Some hollow heart
Makes common cause with the abettors; toils,
Suffers perhaps; draws on himself all eyes,
All trust, until their cause and he be one;
When gets he all he asks for,—sought for,—power!
The which awhile he wields to profit them;
But, now secure of, casts the mask aside,
Employs for his own ends, without consent
Of man or angel, until those that groan'd
At evil days gone by, now shake the head
And wish them back again!
*Alma.* Thy life's near spent!
Husband the little that remains of it.

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*Ruph.* He husbands life who looks not to its length
But use, and uses it to glorify
The giver!
*Alma.* Dotard!—Hither comes your son!
*Ruph.* Turn not your face aside, nor move away,
You need not shrink from him, he does not come!

*Re-enter* NUNEZ *and the others.*

*Alma.* Is he not found?
*Nunez.* No!
*Alma.* No? He must be here!
He pass'd not forth!—I swear he pass'd not forth.
Where is your son, old man?—What smile you at?
*Ruph.* At your simplicity, Almagro.
*Alma.* Ay!
*Ruph.* Ay, sir, to ask a father for his son,
That you may give him up to butchery!
He is safe, sir, safe!—His father's life upon it!
*Alma.* Maybe!—maybe!—He must be found!

*Enter* COTEZ [*hastily*].

*Cortez.* The Regent?
*Alma.* Here, sir!
*Cortez.* Obedient to your highness' will,
I sought the King, in straiter custody
To place him.
*Alma.* Well, sir!—and you found him?
*Cortez.* No.
*Alma.* Treason on every side!—Produce your son!
*Ruph.* I cannot!
*Alma.* Tell us where you have bestow'd him.
*Ruph.* I will not!
*Alma.* Take him to the rack!
*Ruph.* The rack!—
What!—an old man like me?—Well, then, the rack!
Thou mock'st its strength, to waste it on a straw!
*Nunez.* My lord, forbear!
*Alma.* What!—Nunez?
*Nunez.* To this pass
Let it not come.
*Cortez.* Give ear, my lord, to Nunez!

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*Alma.* Talk to a whirlwind!—Am I Regent, Cortez;
Or you, or Nunez?
*Nunez.* Hand will I have none
In such a deed.
*Cortez.* Nor I.
*Alma.* You will not?—Ay!—
Omer,—See it done!—You may withdraw, my friends. [NUNEZ *and* CORTEZ *retire.*
Away with him!
*Ruph.* When the command shall come
That summons thee away, thou 'lt shrink from it,
As never shall my body from the rack!
[RUPHINO *is taken out by* OMER *and Guards.*
*Alma.* Hence!—Now have I thought what Chaos was,
Before the world sprung out of it!—Immense
Perplexity of things!—Nothing, itself!
Naught individuality, but merging
Into some other thing. Ambition, Love,
Hatred, Revenge, Determination, Fear,
All holding sway together, but with strife
That makes a mock of rule! I cannot see
The light for darkness; darkness fails with light!
I cannot stop,—nor yet, for stops, go on!—
I am not anywhere,—yet everywhere!
Somewhere to fix!—some shape to give resolve!
It takes a form, and straightway vanishes
Into some other—then another yet,
Until confusion reels!

*Enter* PEDRO.

*Pedro.* My lord!
*Alma.* Well, Pedro?
Has the old man confess'd?
*Pedro.* No.
*Alma.* No!—Enough;
Remove him from the rack!
*Pedro.* That duty, death
Has spared us.
*Alma.* Dead?
*Pedro.* He is dead!

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*Alma.* I feel his frost!
He freezes more than I, but feels it not!
As with the thunder comes the clearing up,
So ends this shock my chaos, and my thoughts
Begin to settle—into ruin!—Ruin?—
Come ruin, then, but not to me alone! [*Goes out.*

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## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*The Ante-room to* OLIVIA'S *Chamber.*

*Two Attendants variously occupied—a knock at the door —which one of them opens.*

*Enter* ALMAGRO, ANTHONIO, *and* OMER.

*Alma.* You are dismiss'd till morning.—You will find
Your couches in the quarter that we spoke of.—
Withdraw; and mind, thanks but precede rewards,
Not stand for them with us! meantime we thank you.
Good night.—
[*Attendants go out,* ALMAGRO *locks the door after them.*
Anthonio! [ANTHONIO *comes forward.*
Are you a man of nerve?
*Anth.* I dare aver I am.
*Alma.* 'Tis a great property,
Which more avails men in this world of barter
Than what they buy or sell;—you know what I mean?
The nerve that gains its point, no matter how!
You will perform the ceremony?
*Anth.* Yes.
*Alma.* Howe'er she may protest, gainsay, entreat,
Threaten, change colour, weep, shriek, swoon away—
It may come to that—in any case whatever,
You will not halt, but on?

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*Anth.* I shall go on!

*Alma.* And I shall render the responses, both
For her, and for myself. Retire and wait
In the Oratory—that 's the door to it.—

[ANTHONIO *goes out.*

Omer!

*Omer.* My lord!

*Alma.* 'Tis likely, as I told you,
Your aid may stead me; in which case approve
The Moor, may boast in you, a worthy son.
You will see her tears, as though you saw them not!
And hear her cries, as though you heard them not!
And limbs, whose tenderness dissuade enforcement,
Reply to as the vice would, say it held them!
Behind these hangings take thy station, till
My summons asks thy aid—till then keep still!

*Omer.* I shall observe, my lord.

[OMER *conceals himself.*

*Alma.* And I reward!
'Tis near the time she makes her toilet up
For the night.—Anon she'll summon her attendants,
And missing their reply, no doubt come forth.

[*The clock strikes.*

Hark! her remembrancer!—listen!

*Olivia* [*within*]. Therese!

*Alma.* Well answer'd, silence!

*Olivia.* What!—Therese!—Therese!
Christina! where are you?

[*Enters without perceiving* ALMAGRO, *who retires a little.*

Where are my maids?
I am left alone by them—and purposely!
I am sure of it!—Alasco does not come,
Nor message has he sent me!—Flight he talk'd of,
And still am I in Sarragossa! Oh!
What mountain huge and inaccessible
Has fate heav'd up between us?—Has he seen
Almagro? tax'd him with the shame he did me?
And, for his honest rashness, answer'd with
His liberty—perhaps his life? That man
Is match for all extremities!—That man,

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I have heard my father say, to gain his end,
Would stop at nought—not blood!—My father, too!
'Tis past the time he used to visit me,
An hour; nor has he come,—no word from him!
My motions watch'd—egress debarr'd me from
The quarters set apart for me!—the cause,
"Reasons of state"—"the Regent's will;" but why
His will, or what those reasons, held from me—
The door! perhaps 'tis free. Lock'd on me still!
[*Tries to open it.*
Heaven is not lock'd!—there is my only refuge!
I'll in, nor other couch enjoy to-night
Save what my knees can make them of the ground,
Whence shall my soul look up to heaven till morning!
[*Retiring, is intercepted by* ALMAGRO.
Almagro!
*Alma.* Not so fast, Olivia—stop;
Or, if you will return into your chamber,
I'll pass along with you.
*Olivia.* Hoa!—help there!
*Alma.* [*grasping her wrist*]. Silence!
Shriek not!
*Olivia.* My wrist is broken, sir.
*Alma.* I grasp'd it,
But not with undue force.
*Olivia.* Look there!—the blood
In answer to your fingers!—Fie!—a man
And use a woman so! Where are my women!—
Wherefore attend they not?—why not obey
My summons?—where are they?
*Alma.* Hence, by my orders;
Far out of reach of hearing—as all others
Who might intrude upon the conference
I mean to hold with you!—You will call in vain.
*Olivia.* Confer with thee!—here?—at this time o'night,
Alone?—a man?—and one I shudder at?
In company, and in the open day!
Confer!—Begone, sir!—If respect, on thy part,
Does not instruct thee to recross my threshold,
Let loathing upon mine! Think what I am, sir,

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And if thou hast forgot thou art a man,
Let that remind thee on 't, and make thee blush,
And drive thee from my presence!
*Alma.* What art thou?
*Olivia.* What am I, sir?—a wife!—I am a wife!—
A name that 's haply borne by one that 's weak,
But gives a power to her, to cope with which,
He that would mock her must make up his mind
To abide the wrath of the stern sanctities
Which in the names of father, brother, husband,
Protect the wearer's honour!
*Alma.* With your leave,
At least a word or two before we part.
*Olivia.* No! not a syllable!
*Alma.* Without your leave, then!
*Olivia.* Dare you compel me?
*Alma.* If you force me.—Girl,
You are in my power!
*Olivia.* Heavens! and for this same man
My brother would have laid his life down! [*to herself.*]
Where
Is my brother?—At the thought of strait to him,
Danger or worse, how, all at once, my heart
Casts off the shackles of congealing fear,
And feels at large, with all its faculties!
[*Resolutely approaches* ALMAGRO, *without looking at him, through abhorrence.*
Almagro, where is my brother?
*Almagro* [*confounded momentarily*]. Where!—
*Olivia.* Take time;
The answer 's not at hand—not to be found
Except by dint of searching for 't—take time!
Yet why delay at all?—Truth has no answer
Save one—if that won't serve, there 's falsehood
with
A thousand.—Take the first of them—from first
To last, they are all the same!—Is he alive?
*Alma.* He is!
*Olivia.* Where is he?
*Alma.* Gone to his command,
As I suppose.

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*Olivia.* As you suppose! You met
Before he went?
*Alma.* I think we did.
*Olivia.* You think!
You had no words?
*Alma.* Words!
*Olivia.* Words! You did not quarrel?
*Alma.* Quarrel!
*Olivia.* No mortal strife fell out between you?
No swords were drawn, nor daggers yet pluck'd forth,
Were there?
*Alma.* My hand fall from my side, if sword
Or dagger quitted sheath of mine to-day!
*Olivia* [*aside*]. No thunder yet, and thunder-clouds
all round!
Out of such pitch and wrack a bolt must come!—
My father! how is it with him? Almagro,
How fares it with my father? where is he?
Or access hither is prevented him,
Or hence he bears my brother company,
Or something or another has befallen him.
Why don't you speak, Almagro? [*looking at him.*]
Gracious powers!
Your face, which scarce till now I lifted eye to,
Is not the same! but changed, and horribly,
How you remind me of a wretch I saw
Taken in the act of murder once! He had pass'd me
An hour before, a hale young man. The change
An hour had made in him! He had aged a life,
E'en in that hour—and so have you since last
I look'd upon you, near as brief a lapse!
Almagro, where is my father? tell me, man!
What takes away your breath, or strikes you dumb?—
I am not your accusing spirit—I am only
My father's child! Are you his murderer?—
He is murder'd!
*Alma.* [*by an effort recovering himself*]. Well may
wonder gasp to meet,
From lips so loved, question of act so hateful!
Listen and interrupt me not.—Thy vows
Thy father-King has all absolved thee from;

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Thou art free to wed again, and wed to me
This very hour shall see thee!
*Olivia.* Wed to thee!
*Alma.* You heard me, did you not?
*Olivia.* Hast thou encounter'd
The horror of the wolf pack, as, at night,
The howl at distance on the mountain road
Admonish'd thee, when hunger was abroad
Roaming ravine and steep, cut off from food,
As the earth lay entomb'd in frozen snow?
I have, until my blood almost congeal'd,
My joints began to lose their faculty,
And, but for help, I must have dropp'd and lain,
Incapable of motion as a stone!
'Twas nothing to the thought of wedding thee!—
Though that I know a thing impossible!—
Not with the wolf pack so! knew I the track
The famish'd monsters would be sure to come;
Sooner would I lie in it, bound hand and foot,
Than risk the chance would make me bride to thee!
Thy hand, presenting me the bridal ring,
I would recoil from as it brought to me
My brother's corse! Yea, as 'twere reeking wi h
My father's blood!—Preserve me Heaven! he looks
Again the very heart and soul of murder!
*Alma.* [*recovering himself*]. I will speak to thee
once more, and then I 'll act.
Observe, within this quarter where thou bidest
There breathe not any can be hindrance to me!
The forms and agents that make man and wife
Are ready!—Sure as in that chamber lies
Thy couch, and his thou call'dst aforetime lord—
That couch receives another lord to-night!
Consent!
*Olivia.* I think—and madden while I think!
O husband, where art thou!—Alasco!—Father!
A wife! a child!—a sister!—and no help!
*Alma.* Consent!—provoke not force!
*Olivia.* I dare you, wretch!
Ay, woman as I am—weak and alone—
I execrate, abhor you, and defy you!



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*Alma.* What, hoa!—within there!

[OMER *and* ANTHONIO *advance.*

*Olivia* [*draws a dagger*]. Is it so? behold, then!
This talisman will I defeat thee with,
Summoning him, with whom, to side with me,
I am more than match for all who come against me!
Witness just Heaven! the act that wrecks my life,
To save my honour, is not mine, but his
Who on this dread extremity impels me!—
Mine honour precious for itself, past life,
But doubly precious for my dear lord's sake;
In faith to whom my heart pours out the blood,
No drop of which was e'er rebellious to him.

[OMER *arrests her arm as she is going to stab herself; she struggles desperately with him—he breathes her name in her ear—she becomes suddenly motionless—gazes at him intently—shrieks, and falls fainting into his arms.*

*Alma.* Prevent her—Oh, well done!—What, is she dead? [*Trumpet at a great distance.*

*Omer.* She has fainted.

*Alma.* Hark!—what hear you?

*Omer.* I mistake,
Or 'tis a trumpet.

*Alma.* From without the walls?

*Omer.* I thought so.

*Alma.* There it is again—it speaks——

*Omer.* Like a friend.

*Alma.* It does so.

*Cortez* [*without*]. Where is the Regent?

*Alma.* [*unlocking the door*]. Here!

*Enter* CORTEZ.

*Cortez.* Alasco and the King, their powers combined,
Approach the gates—a herald in their names
Demands admittance, which the crowd, not only,
But e'en the soldiery, to yield incline.
Ruphino's death is bruited far and wide,
And discontent thereon is open-mouth'd.
Still of your special friends the most stand true,
The which to keep behoves you show yourself.

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*Alma.* I come to them, away !—I follow you.

[CORTEZ *goes out.*

Observe my signet—should I send it to you, [*to* OMER.
The purpose now you balk'd yourself effect.
'Tis but her own intent that you fulfil,
So may the act light on your conscience sit.
That done, you know where lie my coffers—Take
The key and help yourself !—Attend me, father !

[*Goes out with* ANTHONIO.

*Omer.* O moment, look'd for in despite of hope,
And art thou come,—and fraught so rich with blessing!
Olivia !—Laps'd as are her senses, still
Perception answers me.—A smile, I am sure,
Began to waken on her lips, though straight
It dropp'd asleep again !—and if there did,
Again I can awaken it.—Olivia !
There 'tis ! not brighter to the mariner
Benighted and storm-torn, his reckoning lost,
Strikes on a beacon the clear rising sun,
Than beams that smile upon her faithful lip !
Her heart resumes its functions,—There it beats !
And o'er her cheek—as wan as death's before,
Life 'gins to shoot, though palely.—Such a welkin
'Gan never yet the dawn to crimson up ;
Whose fragrance is a beggar to the balm
That breathes upon me now !—Her eyelids quiver !
They open, if I breathe her name again !
How near may joy, life's feast, become its bane,
Lack to abundance on a sudden turning !
If I so gasp, how may it prove with her ?
She knew me !—clear she did !

*Olivia* [*coming gradually to herself*]. Alonzo ! Sure !
I saw Alonzo !—Through no other's eyes
Alonzo's soul could look !—I heard him speak too !
It must be so, or wherefore is his voice
Fresh in mine ear ?—who holds me ?—Is't Alonzo ?—

[ALONZO *turns away from her.*

Show me thy face !—the mockery of dye
And gear !—to change the dress and the complexion,
While the soul sits in her assured seat,—
The eye, which scoffs at hues and garniture



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That would supplant its own! Though thou didst take
The Ethiop's 'haviour and habiliments,
I would know thee!—call thee my Alonzo!—throw
My trustful arms around thee!

*Alon.* My Olivia!

*Olivia.* Ah, my dear lord!—

[*Raising her head from his neck and gazing upon him, then sinking on his neck again. Shouts without.*

What means that tumult?

*Alon.* Safety.

*Re-enter the* Priest.

*Priest.* This signet from the Regent.

*Alon.* What has happened?

*Priest.* Almagro, striving to retain the city,
Was by his own abettors overborne.
The gates have welcomed in their former master,
With whom Alasco enters now; which issue
As soon as he foresaw, Almagro gave
This signet to me, with injunction strict
To place it in thy hand.

*Alon.* 'Tis well!—retire. [Priest *goes out.*

*Olivia.* Why sends Almagro, love, to thee his signet?

*Alon.* For thy destruction.

*Olivia.* Fit that he, who slew
The father, should destroy the child—for well
I know he slew him.

*Alon.* Even there is hope!
Oh Heaven! thou turn'st again the hue of death—
Bear up!—be strong in trust.—Why am I here
If not advisedly—why seem I what
You see, but for an end?—Oh, tune thy soul
To thoughts of comfort, even there, where hope
Seems dead!—Forbear to question! Come with me,
And list what I shall tell thee as we go! [*They go out.*

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## SCENE II.—*The Corridor of the Palace.*

*Enter* VELASQUEZ *and* ANDREAS, *meeting* NUNEZ.

*Velas.* Saw you Alasco, as you came along?
*Nunez.* No, sir.
*Velas.* The same response I meet from all:
Strange, how I lost him all at once!—we enter'd
The citadel together! where can he be?
Only a word or two I changed with one,
Apart, who drew me to confer with him,
And straight returning, found Alasco, vanish'd.
*Nunez.* Remember'st who was with him?
*Velas.* Cortez.
*Nunez.* Right!
Myself remark'd them—overheard them speaking,
Touching the manner of Ruphino's murder,
The while Almagro, guarded, walk'd before.
*Velas.* Almagro? you remind me now of him.
Him, also, did I miss.
*Nunez.* At the same time?
Where'er they are, most like they are together.
*Velas.* The chance o'erleaps your guess—Be sure they are!
At such a juncture, but his father's death,
And he the hated instrument of it,
Could so engross Alasco that he leaves
The throne untended that gives amnesty
To wide revolt; and, for the grace it deigns,
Receives whole hearts with thrice-sworn homage back!
Let's search for good Alasco.—Near Almagro,
Guarded and chain'd, I fear for him; no match,
'Gainst such a maze of wily villany!
Speed, sirs—bestir yourselves—he must be found!
[*They go out.*

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SCENE III.—*The Dungeon of Torture. Around, the various Implements. In the front, on one side, the rack; on the other, the block.*

*Enter* ALASCO,—*stops and looks after him.*

*Alas.* Why do you hesitate? Come in, Almagro! Come in.

*Enter* ALMAGRO, *followed by* Jailer *and* Guards.

*Alma.* A strange place this for conference!

*Alas.* It is a silent and retired place:
What fitter then? Here are no eaves-droppers!
No thin partitions which invite the ear
While they repel the eye!—Free speech may here
Make free! Your sword, good jailer, leave with me,
And lay it noiselessly on yonder bench;
Then, with your friends, retire; and as you go,
Make fast the door. An hour hence, come again!—
By then, we shall have done. There for your pains.
[*Aside to* Jailer.

[*Gives a purse to the* Jailer, *who retires with* Guards, *locking the door after them, having previously laid his sword as directed.*

*Alma.* Why does he lock the dungeon door?

*Alas.* To keep
Intrusion out. Such friends as you and I,
Sharing their hearts alone with one another,
Endure not bystanders when they confer!
Is it not so?

*Alma.* Why are we here?

*Alas.* Almagro!
Why are we anywhere, but by the will
Of Heaven?—Its will be done!—Will you say so?

*Alma.* Why should I not?

*Alas.* Why, Heaven has given command
To men, they shall not murder; and 'tis written,
Who sheddeth blood shall bleed!—Sit down, Almagro,
On yonder engine.—I shall seat me here;
Such things awaken thoughts of seriousness,
And serious is the work we have in hand!—
Won't you sit down?—Decline you the fair seat?

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You shrink from it! You are a man of ruth!
You know full well it is the couch of groans,—
Of sweat-drops, wrung by dint of agony,—
Of death pangs, thick and sharp, though lingering,
In one of which more writhing lies than he knows
Who, limb by limb, is broken on the wheel!—
And yet, when I bethink myself again,
I wonder you should loathe the instrument!
For look at me!—I breathe as free as ever;
My arms are folded o'er a heart at ease;
Its wonted hue, methinks, invests my cheek,
And I am sitting on the very block,
Yet never lifted axe to lop a head!—
Come!—take your seat, Almagro!

*Alma.* What do you mean?

*Alas.* I'll tell you, answer me a word or two!
Did I not trust you?—did I not love you?—both
With the simplicity of a very boy?
You know I did.—If you do not, say so.

*Alma.* I do not say so.

*Alas.* No?—So far, so well.

*Alma.* What do you purpose?—wherefore bring me hither?

*Alas.* I haven't done yet!—Was't not my pride, Almagro,
To build you up in men's esteem above
Myself?—Whene'er they gave Alasco credit
For this or that desert,—did he not mount
Your merits on his own? If he did not,
Deny it.

*Alma.* Nay, I don't deny it.

*Alas.* Well,
Again!

*Alma.* Alasco, this is freezing work!

*Alas.* Not so, Almagro,—all the frost's to come!
You were a man of doubtful rank, Almagro—
I mean in men's esteem—when first I knew you;
Among our comrades, some did rate you low,
Some high, though doubtingly; none very high;
I raised you to the top, and kept you there;
Yea, when the people's choice between us lay

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In even balance, 'gainst myself I gave
The casting vote at once that made you Regent!
Now, to the credit side—my debts to you!
They are few, but large, Almagro!—Foremost, then,
A sister's sacredness profaned!—That trespass,
Had I learn'd it then, all the rest had saved thee—
Tell me how a man a modest woman treats,
And I'll tell you what kind of man he is!
In the next place—my credit undermined—
You know who Cortez is—and with the smile
Of a friend, that never yet play'd fast and loose,
My freedom jeopardised—perhaps my life!—
And last of all—ay,—look upon the rack!—
You might as well have laid an infant on it,
You would as soon!—I believe it!—last of all,
My father like a sound leaf withering,
Which if allow'd to hang its little time
Falls with a breath that hardly stirs the spray,
Thou wouldst not suffer dreamingly to die,
But brought'st, with heart to ruth impenetrable
As flint to dew, to an untimely end,
Forestalling sleep with torture!

*Alma.* You forget!
Your father hated me—what progeny,
Except the serpent, should the serpent have?
You thwarted me,—who would not push aside
The lett that stood 'twixt his soul's wish and him?
Your sister drove me mad with love, and spurn'd me!

*Alas.* You never knew what love was!—Love!—
What! love
A virtuous maiden, and, with no inclining
On her part towards thee, dare to violate
Even the gauze that veils her modest face?
He ne'er knew love—can never know—who knows not
Woman unlapsed is, next to Heav'n, most sacred!
Say that the man, who would profane her, loves her!
And if he does, brutes love as much as he!
You ne'er went mad with anything so holy!

*Alma.* Why have you brought me to this place?

*Alas.* To die!

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That thou shouldst bring me to the pass, Almagro,
That makes me tell thee this !—me !—thy Alasco !
Thine even more, in cherishing, than ever
He was his own; whose brain, heart, body, limbs,
At any time sooner than for himself,
He had laid down for thee !—When a gaunt bear
Rush'd from a thicket towards thee once, who lay,
Ere thou couldst wink, struggling upon the ground
'Twixt thee and him ? calling to thee to fly,
So all forgetful was he of himself,
Although entangled in the deadly hug
Of the fell monster ? With my forest knife
I saved this arm its blood,—so saving thee—
This arm, now nerved to kill thee !—[*Drawing*].—
How can this be ?
How has it come to pass ?—whence this blank wreck
Of love, so staunchly built, I could have sworn
The storm blew never yet could break it up !
Tell me !—for I am wild with wondering !
*Alma.* I wonder too, but am not wild withal,
That thou shouldst wish to take thyself the life
Thou knowest to be forfeited.
*Alas.* Why, who
So fit to be thy executioner ?—
To fill the office whose revolting nature
Flesh creeps at so, its functionary sickens,
With loathing, those who only look upon him ?
Who, for an office so unnatural,
So fit, as such a trespasser 'gainst nature
As I am ? —to a stranger to my blood
Who gave that trust, which to the source of it
I owed but would not give ! — Except for me,
Thou ne'er hadst laid my father on the rack ;
'Twas I who gave thee power o'er his grey hairs,
I was his murderer as well as thou.
Of felons men make executioners !
*Alma.* My blood be on thy soul, so shedd'st thou it !
*Alas.* Almagro, I will shed it !—thou must bleed,
And by this hand ; but I will use this hand
As it becomes a soldier and a man !—
Here is another sword ! – This brave revenge

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Breathed I the wish to take, I were prevented!
The meanest hind in Arragon would flout
The thought of honourable chastisement
To one so fallen as thou art,—but I hold it
A debt due to a father by his son,
And mean to pay it in full!—No further parley!
What is infirm in thee, as I do know
But must not now cast thought to, overlook!
Come, guard thy life!—strike manfully at mine!
'Tis the last time its bane may prove thy safeguard!

*Alma.* Hold yet a moment!—thou wouldst give me, sure,
Fair play!—Thy weapon is the longer one!—

*Alas.* Measure it!—there!

[*Gives his sword to* ALMAGRO, *who throws it away.*

*Alma.* Lo! thou who now so freely
Wouldst shed Almagro's blood, and boastingly
Didst make a merit on 't, look to thine own!
Not by Alasco's honourable sword,
Nor by the scaffold, shall Almagro die!
Such means am I provided with as scoff
At aught the executioner, or thou
Canst perpetrate against me. Mark, Alasco!
Almagro dies, but thou shalt die before him;
For in thy weakness, which I ever loathed,
I see the bane that to this close has brought
My dearest hopes and me! Yet, ere I use
The vantage which thy trustfulness—I thank it
For the last time—has given me, it is fit
Thou know the full extent of what thou owest me.
Thou thought'st thy debt on the score of old Ruphino
Was large enough; but what will be thy wonder
When I shall tell thee thou mayst add to that
Another larger yet? Know then, Alasco,
Soon as the tide of fortune 'gan to ebb,
Sudden as it set in, and 'gainst the chance
Of aught which thou, and those in league with thee,
Could practise 'gainst me, I secured myself;—
By my contrivance did thy sister's dagger
Drink her own blood!

*Alas.* —Now let thy sword drink mine!

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I will not swerve to avoid thee!—lift my arm
To hinder thee!—move so much as a finger!
I am a man the earth must loathe to bear!
All who lives on 't must loathe! who loathes himself!
*Olivia* [*without*]. Alasco!
*Alma.* [*terrified*]. Heard you aught?
*Alas.* [*in wonder*]. My sister call'd.
*Ruph.* [*without*]. Alasco!
*Alas.* [*greatly moved*]. That 's my father's voice.
*Alma.* The dead.
Arise! [*Dropping the sword, and clasping his hands.*
*Velas.* [*without*]. Alasco!
*Alas.* Now Velasquez calls!
*Alma.* Velasquez is not dead?
*Alas.* Sustain me, Heaven!
Out of such darkness, if such light should break,
Has nature strength to bear it? What was that
One whisper'd me as I came in? "With doubt
Receive whate'er thou hearest." Am I to doubt
My father's death? my sister's death? I have heard
Of nought beside—

[VELASQUEZ, RUPHINO, *and* OLIVIA, *without, calling together.*

*All.* Alasco!
*Olivia* [*without*]. Open, Pedro.

[*The door opens;* OLIVIA, RUPHINO, *the* KING, ALONZO, VELASQUEZ, *and* PEDRO, *enter.*

*Alas.* Alive!
*Olivia.* My brother!—Safe! Thanks, gentle Heaven!
Alasco, my Alasco!—O my brother! [*Embracing him.*
*Alas.* My father, too! Oh!—pardon your Alasco!
[*Kneeling to* RUPHINO.
*Ruph.* My son, we all need pardon!
*Alas.* Who is he?
*Olivia.* The gracious prince; who, of my danger warn'd,
Return'd to Sarragossa; thus disguised,
Watch'd o'er thy sister at his dear life's peril,
And thereby saved thy father from the rack,
Her from dishonour!

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*Alas.* Sir, I am confounded!—
What shall I say to thee?
*Alon.* Call me thy brother!
*King.* As hence, thy sister I shall call my child!
*Alma.* [*aside*]. Destroy'd by those I deem'd my instruments!
Frustrated in revenge, in love and hate!
What fair set-off 'gainst such discomfiture?
The gibbet cheated, or the block, or wheel!
Could we cheat Heaven!—No circumventing there!
What's this I see?—Instead of the huge World,
A film; and what before was shadowy,
The World to come, condensing into vast
Enormous substance, insupportable
To thought! The drug asserts its potency!
This is the death-sweat that bedews my palms,
My forehead and my lip, and like a cold
And slimy serpent, coiling round my frame,
With its loathed folds, my very marrow chills.
*King.* What man is he, that yonder stands and lives,
Yet seems in the mortal agony?
*Alas.* Almagro.
*King.* What!—he?—then has he look'd upon the sun
For the last time!—the rack shall deal with him.
No death-bed half so fit. Let's leave him to it. [*Going.*
*Alas.* Oh no, my liege!
*King.* Thou wouldst not plead for him!
Up! up! thy knee rebels, young man, to bend
'Gainst nature! justice! Earth and Heaven, themselves,
To supplicate for him whom they condemn!
Against thy father's life thou makest suit,
Against thy sister's honour—not to name
The wrong he meditated 'gainst thyself!
Forbear, young man. Why hang you thus your head,
And still the posture keep that casts it down?
What would you ask for?
*Alas.* Time for penitence.
A month! Well, then, a week! If not a week,

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A day! Between the attempt, sir, and the act
There is a difference; so should there be
Between the pains with which we visit them.
The crimes he dies for were not perpetrated;
No victim calls for retribution.
Spare him. O God! sir, we were boys together.
Howe'er it changes with us on life's road,
The sunny start all intervals breaks through,
And warms us with the olden mood again!
The hearty laugh of youth is in mine ear,
And there stands he who shared it with me, now
A woful bankrupt; while the rich possessions
I counted lost, are all my own again.
I can't forbear. Say that I hold my tongue,
My eyes will speak: you see they do without;
And for the playmate's sake implore thee spare
The man, although a weak and guilty one!

*King.* Against my judgment does my heart give way,
Corrupted by your tears. His life is yours:
Do with it what you list!

*Alas.* It shall be spared.
An exile shall he live to die in penitence!
Almagro!

*Pedro.* Hush! He dies by poison, sir!
I know the signs. He makes a sudden end!
His spirit 's gone—it fleeted with that groan!

*Alas.* The pardon you permitted, Heav'n denies him!
Its justice and its mercy are its own!

THE END.

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